



NAVY NEWS

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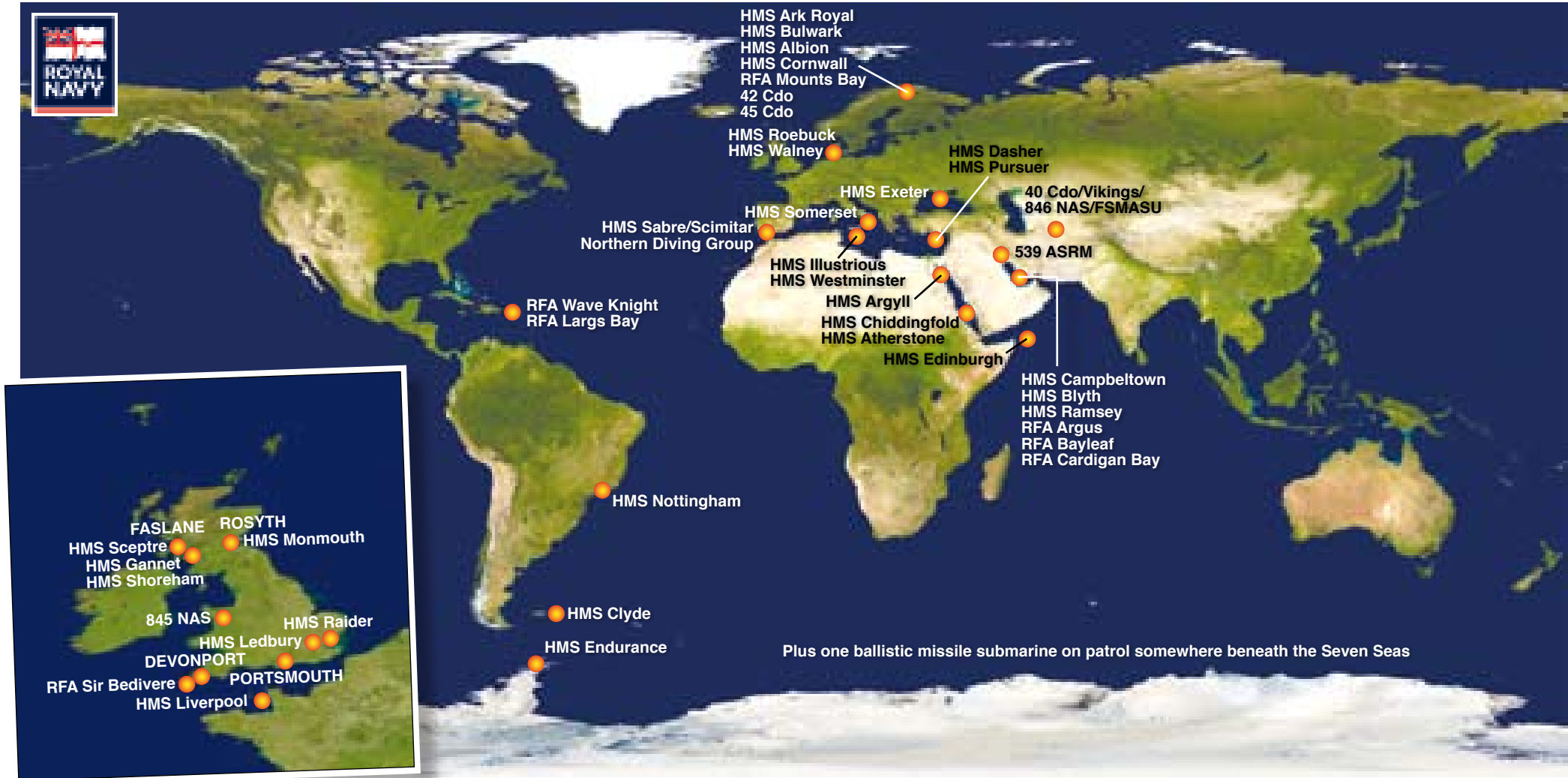
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THE Merlin of the 'capital ship', HMS Westminster, prepares for another sortie during the frigate's Orion 08 deployment. The Type 23 warship is providing anti-submarine escort for the task group, led by flagship HMS Illustrious, but has also demonstrated her prowess in downing threats in the air courtesy of her Seawolf missiles. *Turn to pages 10 and 11 for more from the task group.*

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU (East)



EYE OF THE HUNTER



Fleet Focus

PHEW. We're amazed we managed to squeeze everything on to our map this month.

Yes the public and press may care little, but the men and women of the Senior Service have been exceptionally busy this spring.

Their efforts seem to be split between extremes of temperature. We'll begin where it's cold.

A sizeable task force and Royal Marine presence could be found clustered around Narvik and Harstad for Armatura Borealis: HM Ships **Albion**, **Bulwark**, **Cornwall** and **Ark Royal**, plus **RFA Mounts Bay**, and the green berets of **42** and **45 Commandos** were all involved in the Allied winter war games (see pages 25-28).

Those war games fortuitously coincided with the discovery by the Norwegians of the wartime destroyer **HMS Hunter**, lost near Narvik in 1940. Sixty-eight years later, the British and Norwegian navies paid their respects to her (see page 23).

Ice and snow are not, of course, the preserve of the Northern Hemisphere. **HMS Endurance** welcomed Britain's second most senior naval officer who paid a rare visit to the ice survey ship on operations around Antarctica (see page 22).

A short distance (relatively speaking) away, destroyer **HMS Nottingham** popped to South Georgia before heading to the warmth of Rio (see pages 8-9).

It can be cold in Scotland too (despite what we said in these pages a couple of months ago) as we found on a visit to Britain's No.1 Search And Rescue unit, **HMS Gannet** (see pages 16 and 17). Gannet's Sea Kings were also called upon during a joint exercise with **HMS Shoreham**, which was paying a visit to nearby Ayr (see page 4).

Minehunter **HMS Walney** stepped into the shoes of **HMS Roebuck** on NATO duties in the Kattegat and Skagerrak (see right) and possibly wished she hadn't as storm after storm lashed her for the better part of a month.

Right, that's enough of the cold, time for the warmth. The RN is back in charge of **Combined Task Force 158** in the northern Gulf... to which **HMS Campbeltown** is attached. She's taken over from **HMS Argyll**, currently enjoying the Egyptian sun after a mammoth patrol aided by **RFA Argus** and **Bayleaf**. At the tip of the Gulf, **RFA Cardigan Bay** is training Iraqi sailors and marines, while **HMS Blyth** and **Ramsey** have been operating alongside the Kuwaitis and Americans. Turn to page 7 for a round-up of operations in and around the Gulf.

Gulf-bound is the Orion 08 task force. Flagship **HMS Illustrious** belatedly made it to Malta (see page 10), accompanied by frigate **HMS Westminster** which has been blasting away with her Seawolf missiles (see page 11). Destroyer **HMS Edinburgh** broke off from the task group to tackle piracy (see page 4) and also operating semi independently are **HMS Atherstone** and **Chiddingfold**; the latter paid her respects to one of the doyens of the RN clearance diving branch (see pages 4 and 23).

In the Med, **HMS Somerset** has been hunting submarines (with varying degrees of success - see page 5) while destroyer **HMS Exeter** enjoyed the high life in Monaco before being given a rare glimpse inside a former top secret Soviet submarine base in the Crimea (see page 6).

845 NAS are gearing up for Afghanistan courtesy of some training in Snowdonia (see page 13). They will be joining their Commando Helicopter Force comrades of **846 NAS** already in theatre.

About to leave Helmand are the Royals of **40 Commando**. They will do so after a particularly successful series of operations around the town of Sangin, now firmly wrestled from Taliban control (see pages 14-15).

And finally... our ship of the month is not **HMS Richmond** (which appeared twice in the space of 90 days - instead of ten years - thanks to an administrative *faux pas*) but the much smaller university training boat **HMS Raider** (see page 12).



Aal's well that ends well

IF THE sailors of HMS Walney were expecting a quiet winter, well they didn't get one.

With barely a week's notice, the Sandown-class warship was asked to stand in for HMS Roebuck on NATO duties in Norway and the Baltic for a month.

The Faslane-based mine countermeasures vessel was readying herself for impending Neptune Warrior war games and a package of pre-deployment training.

All those plans had to be thrown (temporarily) out of the window. The stores suddenly filled with cold weather clothing and the navigator clambered aboard clutching a bevy of charts of Norwegian waters.

He was followed by the command staff, who would direct the operations of NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures

Group 1, which includes HMS Hurworth, over the weeks to come from their new flagship.

The task force had a fairly punishing schedule which waited for no man - irrespective of weather.

And if you think we've had a pretty rotten winter here in Blighty, well it's been far worse at sea... especially if you're a small minehunter.

The force was battered by an incessant procession of storms from which the fjords around Stavanger in Norway offered little protection.

Still it's not all been bad. As flagship of the NATO group, Walney hosted her fair share of



cocktail parties and had the honour of leading the Allied warships into the Danish port of Aalborg.

The town welcomed the visiting sailors with open arms... and Walney learned that Aalborg was very much a 'sailors' town', not least thanks to one street which boasted 198 clubs, pubs and restaurants.

Suitably recovered from their exertions in Aalborg, the ships moved to Fredrikshavn for the Danish-led exercise Aut Batt, a cross between a mine hunt and a Thursday war (with surface and aerial attacks thrown at the force).

There was, sadly, little chance for either; inclement weather brought the curtain down on Aut

Batt prematurely and the small ships returned to the sanctuary of port.

The good news about Aut Batt's demise, however, was that Walney could return to Faslane as Roebuck returned to the force to resume her flagship duties.

The bad news was that as soon as she sailed for home, she sailed into the teeth of a storm. Gusts battering the ship exceeded 50kts at times.

With the wind, the ship made 6kts more than her maximum speed but against it, as she rounded Cape Wrath, she lost 5kts.

After a three-day bruising, Walney sailed up the Clyde for home. Now alongside, it's off with the Norwegian and Danish charts and on with preparations for Neptune Warrior and pre-deployment training.

● *Thirtysomething...* Just days after her 30th birthday, hunter-killer submarine HMS Sceptre leaves Faslane bound for Loch Long to conduct trials.

The Barrow-built boat was commissioned on Valentine's Day 1978... that's 13 years before the youngest member of her ship's company came into this world. Actually, the average age of the crew is just one year older than Sceptre herself (the oldest deep aboard is 47).

All on board celebrated with a rather large cake (featuring, of course, the submariners' legendary dolphins crest) courtesy of the boat's catering department, chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)) Tinker, Marshall and PO Boyle.

Despite her longevity, the Swiftsure-class submarine has a couple more years of service left in her; she's due to pay off in 2010.

Picture: LLogs Stu Hill, FRPU Clyde



Red Rose on Merseybeat

IF MOHAMMED can't get to the mountain, well you know the rest.

Frigate HMS Lancaster can't squeeze down the Lune to get to her namesake town.

She can, however, quite easily navigate the Mersey, where she was met by various affiliates during a stop in Liverpool.

The Type 23 has spent much of 2008 on principal warfare officer training, which meant lots of air attacks, boarding operations and anti-submarine exercises.

So a visit to the European Capital of Culture (*cough*, splutter – *Mancunian Assistant Ed*) was a welcome reprieve from war.

The ship's football sides took on various local teams, and the frigate herself hosted players from Premiership side Everton.

Then it was back to war, this time more training on passage to the northern Spanish port of Vigo.

Joining the Red Rose for the crossing from Merseyside to Spain were fathers and sons of various members of the ship's company.

Luckily for them, the Bay of Biscay was in a rather forgiving mood.

Liverpool goes to Guernsey

AFTER two months being given a thorough test, you would have thought HMS Liverpool was sick of the sight of naval trainers.

And probably they were. But it didn't stop a team from the Flag Officer Sea Training joining the destroyer yet again.

Liverpool has already passed through Operational Sea Training – the 'MOT' from the Admiralty which permits a ship to head off on a front-line deployment.

But the FOST team wanted to scrutinise the Portsmouth warship's sea safety training before Liverpool heads to the South Atlantic to replace her sister Nottingham.

They did so not in FOST's traditional playground off Plymouth but in and around Guernsey, where Liverpool spent three days conducting exercises, hosting local dignitaries, and also explaining to Channel Island emergency planners what the RN could offer in the event of a disaster striking the area.

Piratical move by Edinburgh

HMS Edinburgh broke off from the rest of the Orion 08 task force (*see page 10*) to put the boot into pirates in the Indian Ocean.

The destroyer joined Combined Task Force 150, a group of Allied warships which sweeps the waters from the Arabian Sea to the Horn of Africa and beyond for illegal activities.

That mission (nor the heat) did not stop the ship's company running around the upper deck in aid of Sport Relief.

Sailors opted to run one, three or seven miles for the charity – which meant, in turn, seven, 21 or 49 circuits of the Type 42's main deck. Each runner paid £5 for the 'privilege' of taking part with more than £100 raised for the good cause.

Knight out in Fowey

THE last of the 'Knights of the Round Table', RFA Sir Bedivere, paid her final visit to Fowey before bowing out of service.

The landing support ship has enjoyed a short but sweet affiliation with the people of the Cornish port, with whom she has been bound since 2005.

Sir Bedivere arrived off the town after a year-long stint in the Gulf training Iraqi sailors and marines.

A wee bit warmer...

DESPITE what Crowded House said, you cannot always take the weather with you.

And for that, the men of the Northern Diving Group are eternally grateful.

They left Faslane behind to carry out training missions at depth – something feasible in Scotland, but the cold and murk of the lochs cannot compete with the Mediterranean.

The divers borrowed kit from the Gibraltar Clearance Diving Unit – permanently based at The Rock to provide security in the harbour and to check visiting warships.

Ordinarily, NDG is on call to deal with explosive ordnance along 8,000 miles of coastline north of an imaginary line drawn from Liverpool to Hull.

Gibraltar cannot offer quite as much coastline (divide by 1,000

and you get the idea), but it can offer sparkling blue waters, warmth and consistency.

"Gibraltar offers us fantastic opportunities to conduct training uninterrupted by the weather," explained Lt Cdr Andrew Ward, CO of the Northern Diving Group.

"With two weeks here, we can take advantage of excellent facilities and achieve a very high level of work-up."

LS(D) Gary Shaw put it more simply: "It's just nice to be actually diving in warmer waters for a wee change. There's been good camaraderie with the lads and the Gibraltar diving squadron as well."

● *Gibraltar-based AB(D) Richard Bailey shows the Scottish divers how it's done*

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East



Rich pickings for Chid

DON'T worry, they got it in the end. It's just that a deflated red blob floating in the Gulf of Aden makes a less interesting picture than a giant inflatable red blob floating in the Gulf of Aden.

This is a 'killer tomato', a target dropped by minehunter HMS Chiddingfold, being straddled by rounds from the warship's 30mm main gun.

The tomato was 'rolled out' to test her gunners' prowess as the warship entered waters where attacks by pirates and terrorists on shipping can take place.

The gunnery team, directed by Lt Jon Campbell, blasted away at the tomato which was eventually recovered in a rather sorry state.

Chiddingfold is sailing in company with her sister Atherstone and 'mother ship' RFA Diligence, which carries stores and supplies for the much smaller Hunts.

The trio form the minehunting element of the much larger Orion 08 deployment which is dispersed across the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.

■ Honouring Ginger's last wish, page 23



Something in the Ayr

TWO Scottish ports have been blessed by visits from Her Majesty's warships.

HMS Shoreham made the short hop along the Firth of Clyde from her home in Faslane to the seaside town of Ayr for a hospitality visit.

The Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessel spent a week in – and out – of the town conducting exercises, hosting locals and working on Search and Rescue and winching serials with a Sea King from HMS Gannet, based at Prestwick just outside Ayr.

The latter exercises were witnessed by students from Ayr Academy who were hosted for a day by Shoreham.

Others enjoying the mine countermeasures vessel's hospitality included the Sea Cadets of TS Mountbatten (Ayr), Gannet (Ardrossan), John Paul Jones (Stewarty) and Argyll (Irvine).

In keeping with the 'youth' theme, Shoreham hosted a careers' forum for head teachers and RN recruiters from across Ayrshire.

On the east coast, frigate HMS Monmouth was doing very much the same during a four-day spell at Ocean Terminal in Leith.

She also hosted a careers' forum and Sea Cadets – in this case TS Lochinvar (South Queensferry) – as well as members of the RNA from Edinburgh and West Lothian.

Also walking up the brow were new recruits from Edinburgh's RNR unit HMS Scotia and several hundred tourists (not at the same time, admittedly) who took advantage of an open afternoon.

From Leith, Monmouth headed to Cardiff so her ship's company could call in on their affiliated town and exercise their freedom of it for the first time.

The Black Duke has enjoyed the freedom of Monmouth for the past six years, but this was the first time her ship's company had exercised that right.

Seventy-five of them paraded through the county town during the five-day visit to Wales – a visit which found the country, and its capital especially, in festive mood as it coincided with the rugby union team's triumph in the Six Nations.

Modern life is rubbish

HELICOPTER carrier HMS Ocean is paving the way for the flat-tops of the future thanks to a revolutionary waste disposal system.

Ocean is in the latter stages of a year-long overhaul by Babcock Marine in Devonport.

Much of that revamp focuses on making the assault ship leaner and meaner.

But some of the work involves making Ocean kinder to the environment.

One such piece of kit (it's not big, but it is clever) is the pyrolysis waste disposal system – it basically turns gash into ash which saves space on the ship and is in line with the MOD's modern waste management thinking.

Ocean is the first RN vessel to receive this bit of waste wizardry; the same technology will be used in the next-generation carriers in a decade's time.

Other improvements to the 21,000-ton vessel – Britain's largest warship – include overhauling her machinery and engines, giving the living spaces a makeover, better comms kit, better aviation facilities to support Apache attack helicopters, more space to house the Royal Marines' equipment, more room for food storage and a re-built galley (which entailed, *inter alia*, replacing 25,000 ceramic tiles).

The work is due to be completed in August when Ocean returns to sea to conduct trials.

● *HMS Somerset with elements of the NATO force in Albania. Next to her are Greece's HS Hydra (F452) and Turkey's TCG Zafer (F253)*

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher



Best laid plans

BUMMER. You're all set to go hunting submarines and then your sonar packs up. And so the hunter becomes the hunted...

The game of cat and mouse between frigate and submarine saw the balance tip decidedly in the mouse's favour as HMS Somerset exercised with a NATO task force off the east coast of Sicily.

The software which drives the world's best anti-submarine sonar, 2087, crashed.

Luckily, however, Somerset has more than

one way to skin a, er, mouse, and used her hull-mounted sonar rather than her towed array to go in search of her prey – then send the ship's Lynx helicopter, Duke, in for the kill.

An excellent Plan B. Except that Duke joined 2087 on the 'out of order' list.

Time for Plan C. Track the boat with your hull sonar, fire torpedoes at maximum range, then run like hell and fire decoys in a bid to escape the torpedoes the submarine has just fired.

Plan C, you will be relieved to hear, worked, although as Somerset's CO Cdr Rob Wilson admits, the frigate rather pushed her luck.

Thanks to some top engineering work both Duke and Sonar 2087 were quickly fixed by the ship's team, giving Somerset a definite advantage over her unnamed prey as Exercise Noble Manta progressed.

The results were outstanding: the prey was held at bay far outside the maximum range of its

weaponry, allowing Duke to move in for the kill.

"This exciting sonar equipment has the potential to change the rules of this deadly game, handing the initiative back to the warship from the submarine," said Cdr Wilson.

Somerset is attached to the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 which prowls the Mediterranean for illegal shipping and terrorist activity and is currently commanded by Turkey's Rear Admiral Ertugrul.

● *A computer graphic of a Joint Strike Fighter on final approach to HMS Queen Elizabeth*

Picture: Thales



Carriers' steel deal struck

MORE multi-million-pound orders have been placed for the 'jigsaw' which will eventually make up the Navy's future carriers.

Eighty thousand tons of steel which will form the hulls of HM Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales will be supplied by works across the UK, with a small amount coming from the continent, at a cost of £65m.

Defence procurement minister Baroness Taylor also announced three smaller contracts, worth around £8m, for machinery and infrastructure to fit out the two 65,000-ton flat-tops.

Fife firm Brand Rex has won the £3m contract to provide optical cabling – which will carry reams of data between complex computer systems – for the sisters.

Rochdale-based Salt Separation Services has been given £1m to provide reverse osmosis plants for both ships; the plants will be capable of producing 500 tons of fresh water for the ship's company every day.

And Fluid Transfer International in Gloucestershire won the £4m contract for kit to fuel and 'de-fuel' the ships' mix of JSF fast jets and helicopters.

As for the steel, Corus (the successor to British Steel) with its sites in Scunthorpe, Motherwell and Teesside, and Dent Steel Services in Bradford will provide more than nine-tenths of the steel plates and bulb flats.

According to the boffins, the steel ordered is equivalent to the quantity needed to build Heathrow's

new Terminal 5 or sufficient to re-build Wembley Stadium three times over.

The ships will be built in segments, like the Type 45 destroyers, at yards in Glasgow, Barrow and Portsmouth, with the pieces of the jigsaw fitted together in Rosyth.

There's progress on the carrier escort front, too.

HMS Duncan is no longer just a name on paper as the sixth of Britain's future destroyer fleet begins to slowly take shape after the first steel was cut on her.

Baroness Taylor and BAE Systems Scott Ballingall performed the honours at BAE's Govan yard on the Clyde, where four of Duncan's sisters have been or are being built.

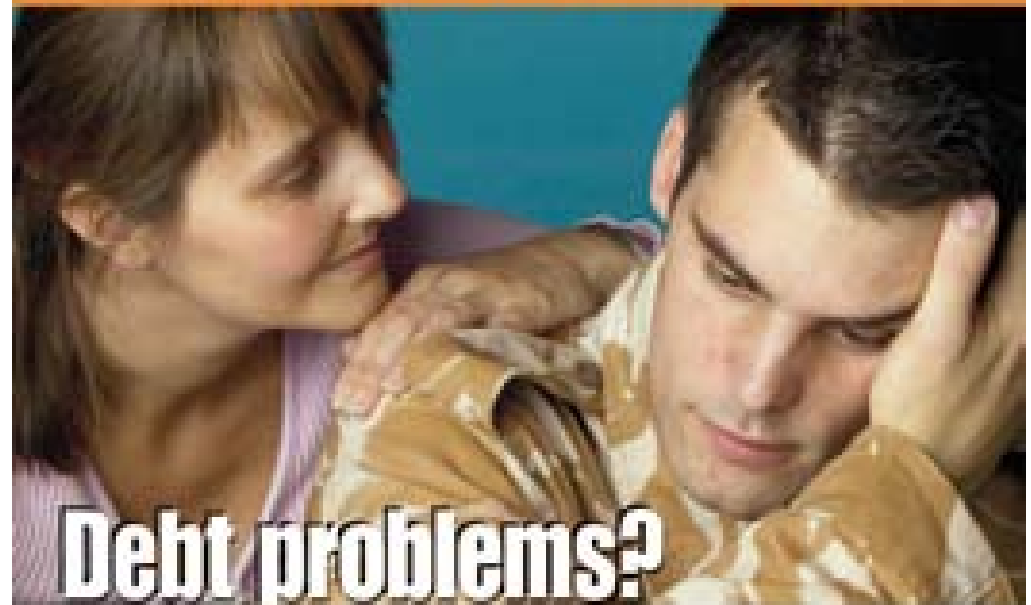
The Type 45s are hailed as the world's most advanced air defence destroyer and will shield the fleet from missile and air attack well into the 21st Century.

Around 3,600 shipwrights, carpenters and electricians are working on the destroyers at BAE's two yards on the Clyde, as well as the VT Group's facility in Portsmouth where the bows and main masts are being built.

Duncan won't see active service until next decade; the oldest of her sisters, Daring, is less than two years away from joining the Fleet.

HMS Daring is gearing up to resume sea trials later this spring. Tests during her first spell at sea last summer around the Firth of Clyde exceeded expectations.

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Dee's death leaves 'a big void'

INSURGENTS in Afghanistan claimed the life of Royal Marine Cpl Damian 'Dee' Mulvihill in a bomb attack near the town of Sangin.

The 32-year-old NCO was killed instantly as he led his section on a sweep of the terrain around the Helmand town on February 20.

Cpl Mulvihill – known by comrades as 'The Bear' – and his men were carrying out a joint Allied-Afghan National Army operation to root out Taleban around Sangin and stop the insurgents from intimidating the local populace when an improvised explosive device was detonated.

"Dee was a unique individual who brought inspiration to all who knew him. He was admired by his peers and respected by his superiors," said Capt Mark Elliott RM, adjutant of 40 Commando.

"His never-ceasing smile and 'bear-like' handshake will always be remembered, as will his passion on the rugby pitch.

"The Royal Marines have lost a truly exceptional individual who will never be forgotten. It is an honour to call him a comrade and even more so a friend."

WO2 Andrew Brownrigg, Alpha Coy Sergeant Major, added: "His absence has left a big void within the company. He never had a bad word to say to anyone and nobody ever had a bad word to say about him.

"My lasting memory of him will be his cheerfulness and his ability to put a smile on people's faces."

Cpl Mulvihill joined the commandos in 1998 and served in Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland.

As well as being an exemplary green beret, he excelled at sport, representing the Corps at rugby union and the Combined Services at water polo.

He had been planning to move to CTCRM at Lympstone at the end of 40 Commando's tour and tie the knot with his fiancée Lisa.

FOSTie period for frigates

FRIGATE Northumberland has returned to sea after a fairly lengthy spell alongside at home in Devonport receiving some TLC ahead of further exertions.

While the Type 23 warship was enjoying an overhaul, her ship's company scattered to the four corners of the UK... and beyond.

Most disappeared on various training courses, but 15 headed to Les Menuires in France to take part in the RN ski championships. Rather warmer climes beckoned for ten shipmates who flew to Dahab in Egypt for a diving expedition.

But now it's back to more mundane activities: damage control and fire-fighting training, seamanship drills and gunnery exercises before Northumberland joins the Flag Officer Sea Training in June for operational sea training to prepare her for deployment later in the year.

The FOST team have already put HMS Chatham through her paces in the less usual surroundings of Portland rather than Plymouth.

The Type 22 frigate spent three days in the Dorset port, where activities alternated between seamanship duties and routines, monitored closely by the FOSTies, and presentations to local dignitaries, associations and members of the public.



● The formerly top-secret underground submarine facility in Sevastopol, now on HMS Exeter's tourist trail

Tunnel visions

TWO tunnels, one known the world over, one hidden for half a century, have welcomed the men and women of HMS Exeter with open 'arms'.

We'll start with the famous one: the tunnel on Monaco's legendary Formula 1 Grand Prix circuit.

It's nearly two decades since a major British warship has visited the tiny principality on France's Mediterranean coast.

That last visitor was HMS Minerva with a young midshipman, Paul Brown, aboard enjoying the hospitality of the fabled resort of the rich and famous.

Eighteen years down the line and a now Cdr Paul Brown was in charge of Exeter as he brought her in to Monte Carlo.

Actually, first of all Exeter stopped at the idyllic town of Villefranche-Sur-Mer, a short hop along the Riviera. There the great and good of Monaco and some ex-pats climbed aboard and joined the ship for the trip along the coast to the principality.

The welcome there from ex-pats and Monegasques was as warm as any Exeter's ship's company had experienced.

More than 30 sailors couldn't resist the chance to drive the F1 circuit (not in F1 cars but a Porsche, Jaguar XKR and Bentley). Unsurprisingly, they didn't set any track records... but they did roar past the Monte Carlo Casino – 'Casino Royale' in the eponymous Bond novel – and through that tunnel.

It wasn't the only taste of the high life for the ship's company. Other sailors were invited aboard the superyacht Rio Rita (as used by, among others, the Duchess of Cornwall); sadly, the hire fee was a little beyond their grasp (£100,000 per week). And yet more took up an invite from the mayor of Monte Carlo to attend the carnival in Nice (think Rio carnival but in the south of France).

And then it was eastwards, through the Med, up the Dardanelles, into the Sea of Marmara, then through the Bosphorus – which few of the ship's company had sailed through before – then into the Black Sea.



Two decades ago, a Royal Navy warship pootling around the Black Sea would have drawn the attention of the Soviets' Black Sea Fleet.

Today, however, Allied navies are fostering ever closer relations with their Black Sea counterparts in the global fight against terrorist and criminal activities on the oceans.

Two Ukrainian naval officers joined Exeter for the passage from Monaco to the Crimean port of Sevastopol, via Constanta in Romania.

"One surprise, especially in Romania, was the unexpected but excellent command of English – almost everyone spoke it perfectly, more so than in some of the UK's closer European neighbours," said Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Peter Broadbent.

That wasn't the case across the Black Sea in Sevastopol, but the Ukrainians were no less hospitable.

One of the highlights of the visit to the peninsula was a chance to tour the battlefields of the Crimean War, including the valley where the Light Brigade thundered to their doom.

Sevastopol itself was later invested by the British and French, a battle which is depicted on a 360° panoramic painting (created over three years by 17 different artists).

From echoes of a distant war to echoes of the Cold War – and the second tunnel in this story.

The sailors were invited to tour Sevastopol's secret 'submarine factory' where the Red Fleet's boats were re-armed during the four-decade stand-off between East and West. Few people outside the military knew of the complex's existence; Sevastopol was a 'closed' city because of its importance as a naval base, but most of its inhabitants were not aware of the facility.

Of course, it's not all yachts, casinos and tunnels for the veteran destroyer – the sole active survivor of the Falklands War.

The key aim of her sortie into the Black Sea was to discuss operations in the Mediterranean that the Romanian and Ukrainian have been involved in already – and those they could be involved with in the future to counter illegal activities on the high seas.

● Exeter basks in the Mediterranean sunshine alongside in Monte Carlo



Astonishing achievement by Gannet

THE busiest Search and Rescue team in Britain received a thank-you from the top man in the military.

Defence Secretary Des Browne dropped in on HMS Gannet, the Prestwick-based Sea King Search and Rescue unit, to pay tribute to men and women who risk their lives so others may live.

The Sea Kings were scrambled 359 times in 2007 – 90 times more than the year before. In doing so they rescued 349 people – 286 of those were injured.

The previous rescue record was held by RAF Chivenor in 2006; its yellow Sea Kings responded to 293 call-outs.

The busy trend shows no sign of abating. The first eight weeks of 2008 have seen 50 people rescued by the Gannet team in 49 rescues, including the high-profile sortie to pluck people from the stricken ferry Riverdance off Blackpool during January's storms.

Operations over the sea are the exception rather than the rule for the Prestwick-based fliers; most of their rescue missions are conducted over the mountains of Scotland – Ben Nevis and Glencoe fall within the 98,000 square miles which are Gannet's domain.

"It's always nice to be able to hold a record, but for all of us here, it's not about that – it's about responding whenever we are needed to provide emergency support. No more, no less. That's our job and it's one we all love," said Gannet's CO Lt Cdr Brian Nicholas.

Mr Browne told the SAR team: "You're to be commended for the excellent work which you do above the land and sea of Scotland's west coast and the north of England.

"A call-out for almost every day of the year in 2007 is an astonishing statistic."

■ Kings of the mountains, pages 16-17

Ocean's Eight for Ledbury

MINEHUNTER HMS Ledbury spent three days in London sharing her knowledge of surveying and scouring the oceans to some of the world's top scientists.

The Hunt-class warship berthed at the ExCel Centre in the docklands for the duration of Oceanography International 08 – a conference and trade show for the marine science and ocean technology community.

Industry uses the exhibition to demonstrate the latest kit, while leading academics get together for conferences to discuss the study of the world's oceans.

Ledbury laid on various demonstrations of her sonar, minehunting and command systems kit to hundreds of visitors and delegates, alongside the French naval survey vessel BH Laplace.

"It was a very interesting exhibition – especially being able to see and compare the latest commercial diving technology," said PO(D) 'Eddy' Edmundson, Ledbury's coxswain.

It wasn't all technology, however, during the spell on the Thames. The ship hosted the Mayor of Ledbury, leading figures from local government and Trinity House, while the sailors visited the Tower of London in uniform as part of the 'RN in the Public Eye' initiative.

Members of the wardroom headed even further west, to Notting Hill, to dine at the top-rated Ledbury restaurant... in Ledbury Road. CO Lt Cdr Paul Russell left the chefs a ship's badge as a memento of the visit.

The minehunter is returning to her *raison d'être* after two years on Fishery Protection Duties. She is currently undergoing intensive training before joining a NATO minehunting force on patrol in European waters.

'A very important mission...'



● 'And so we're told this is the golden age'... Sea and sky blend into one as HMS Campbeltown heads to Bahrain during her Gulf patrol

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter, FRPU East

THE small industrial port of Safaga is perhaps not everyone's ideal destination.

But to the men and women of HMS Argyll it was probably akin to Xanadu and the Garden of Eden rolled into one after one of the most demanding spells at sea in the frigate's history.

Last month we told you that we couldn't really tell you what Argyll had been up to.

And that remains the case. But we can tell you how long she's been doing what we can't tell you about... 52 days.

That's 52 days continually at sea in the Gulf and Indian Ocean (yes, we know submariners do a lot longer but their boats are designed for such sustained operations).

Argyll began her Gulf deployment in earnest with a 30-day spell safeguarding the Iraqi oil platforms – a pretty lengthy patrol in itself.

She handed over that duty to HMS Campbeltown, then popped into Bahrain to prepare herself for a marathon stint at sea.

"Sustaining a Type 23 frigate, which was designed for North Atlantic operations, off East Africa for such a period has been an immense task," said Cdr Gavin Pritchard, Argyll's Commanding Officer.

It took Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Argus and Bayleaf, plus the RFA's US equivalent, the USNS John Lenthall and Walter S Diehl, and a fair bit of resilience from Jack and Jenny to keep the Type 23 going for so long.

"It's testimony to high standards and hard work that we've been able to sustain our fighting capability and achieve everything that has been asked of us," Cdr Pritchard added.

"I am very proud of the whole ship's company for their professionalism throughout

a difficult and changing programme."

Argyll has been away from home in Devonport since the beginning of October and won't be home for some time yet as she continues anti-terror and security patrols east of Suez.

The good news for her crew, however, is that Argyll's days in the Middle East are numbered as her replacement is already Gulf-bound. Her sister HMS Montrose has left Devonport and is currently in the Med.

The current guardian of the oil platforms, HMS Campbeltown, was joined by 120 students from Kuwait's staff college over two days.

A packed programme of demonstrations was laid on for 60 Kuwaitis on each day: air defence exercises, Lynx operations, boarding operations and fast attack defence drills.

And talking of Kuwaitis... A dozen hopped aboard HMS Blyth during a combined exercise involving the British, US and Kuwaiti navies.

The ships of the Aintree task force, HMS Blyth and Ramsey, left Bahrain behind for a week or so to head north.

RN minehunting skills were instrumental in opening up the waters to Kuwait during the 1991 war with Iraq and clearing a path for humanitarian aid to Umm Qasr a dozen years later during the campaign to oust Saddam Hussein.

Several of Blyth and Ramsey's ship's companies served in the 1991 operation; many more took part in the 2003 conflict. They shared their experiences and expertise with their Kuwaiti counterparts during a week-long exercise.

They were joined by American diving experts (EODMU6), a dedicated US helicopter minehunting squadron (HM15)

and the USS Scout, a large minehunter (roughly twice the size of a Sandown-class ship).

Six Kuwaiti clearance divers joined HMS Blyth.

Their work with their opposite numbers from Britain was made considerably easier by the fact that their officer had trained at Dartmouth and several of the divers had undergone training on Horsea Island.

While Blyth focused her efforts on the UK-Kuwaiti diving team to cope with dummy mines in the northern Gulf, Ramsey was the 'disaster' ship – or, more accurately, the 'coping with disaster' ship.

A 'sick' American diver was cross-decked to the Sandown as part of a casualty exercise, before undergoing treatment in Ramsey's therapeutic recompression chamber.

As well as dealing with the mine threat, the ship's company also had to contend with firefighting and enemy attacks courtesy of demonstrations laid on for their Kuwaiti visitors.

A few miles away, off the coast of Iraq, amphibious support ship RFA Cardigan Bay became the saviour of Iraqi sailors when their ship sank in the northern Gulf.

The aged MV Nadi spent five days wallowing in the middle of the sea after breaking down as she headed from Umm Qasr to the United Arab Emirates to be sold off.

Her crew tried to radio for help but a combination of bad weather and faulty wireless kit meant their maydays went unanswered until the signal was finally picked up by tanker USNS Sacagawea.

The American auxiliary plucked the sailors from their sinking vessel, before ferrying them by helicopter to Cardigan Bay at the tip of the Gulf.

The RFA, which serves as a forward floating base for training Iraqi Navy sailors and

naval infantry, offered the ten mariners shelter and food and made arrangements for the men to be reunited with their families in Basra.

On a more permanent basis, Cardigan Bay is home to two fast craft from Inshore Boat Unit 22 and three Iraqi Navy patrol boats.

The former provide souped-up protection for Allied shipping in the northern Gulf; the latter are vital for training Iraqi sailors and marines in the art of boarding vessels, defending shipping from terrorist attack, and safeguarding the two oil terminals which pump Iraq's principal export into waiting tankers.

The RFA's vast loading dock also provides shelter for the patrol boats from the dust storms which whip up around here; on Cardigan

Bay's predecessor, veteran RFA Sir Bedivere (now paid off and awaiting her fate in Portsmouth Harbour), the craft were invariably exposed to the elements.

Keeping the boats in the flooded-up dock has also significantly reduced the time it takes for them to be launched for patrols.

Cardigan Bay is increasingly serving as the hub for naval operations in the northern Gulf – and not merely as a centre for training Iraqis.

The landing support ship is also the focal point for mail drops in the area, as well as transfers of personnel in and out of theatre by boat or helicopter.

The operations of Cardigan Bay and Campbeltown are now directed by a Brit once again with Cdre Duncan Potts stepping

into the shoes of Australian Commodore Allan du Toit at the helm of Combined Task Force 158.

CTF158 oversees the US-UK-Australian mission to protect Iraq's oil terminals and maintain security at sea in the northern Gulf, directing operations from a small control centre on the Khawr Al Amaya platform.

The three Allies take it in turns to oversee operations, with Cdre Potts in charge until August.

"We have a very important mission to conduct. I have the right people, ships and aircraft to achieve the level of stability that is needed," said Cdre Potts.

"Iraq's territorial waters may be small, but I see them as the umbilical cord which feeds much of the Iraqi economy."

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● Cutting edge... a rare view of the bow of HMS Argyll slicing through rather clear Gulf waters



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● Preen of the seas... A penguin cleans itself while HMS Nottingham anchors off Grytviken



The age of

IT'S been a case of 'out of the freezer and into the frying pan' for HMS Nottingham this past month as the destroyer experienced opposite ends of the temperature scale in the South Atlantic.

We will begin in the freezer – South Georgia, to be accurate.

Although it was still high summer in the Southern Hemisphere when the Type 42 warship arrived in this isolated cluster of islands, there was plenty of ice and snow on display for the ship's company.

There were plenty of icebergs too (one almost a mile in length) which were deftly avoided by the bridge team.

Nottingham lowered her anchor off King Edward Point, close to the South Georgian 'capital' Grytviken, permitting most of the ship's company to get ashore by boat.

Some sailors headed to the island's museum, others went in search of penguins (admittedly, they're not too hard to find as South Georgia is home to several large colonies).

Suitably chilled, the sailors decided some austral warmth was the order of the day and turned north towards South America in company with her tanker RFA Gold Rover.

She pumped 500 cubic tons of fuel into Nottingham's tanks during two replenishments at sea – enough to keep the average family car running for seven million miles, apparently.

And then it was on to warm climes. As temperatures topped 30°C, so Nottingham ground to a halt in the middle of the ocean and the cry 'Hands to bathe' echoed around the hallowed



passageways and mess decks.

Those warm waters eventually carried the destroyer to Rio de Janeiro, where the ship celebrated the Royal Navy's role in the foundation of the modern Brazilian nation.

Two hundred years ago the Royal Prince of Portugal and the Portuguese court arrived in Rio. They did so escorted by four of His Majesty's warships: Marlborough, Bedford, London and Monarch.

The arrival of the Portuguese royal family was a seminal moment in Brazilian history. The country's ports were opened to free trade with friendly countries and she began to take her place with the other nations of this world.

Two centuries later, the Brazilians marked the occasion in company with their British allies. Kim Howells, the Foreign Office minister for Latin America, flew to Rio to join the head of the Brazilian Navy for a celebration aboard HMS Nottingham.

It has, of course, not been all penguins, parties and dips in the ocean for the destroyer.

Nottingham is at the tail end of a six-month deployment to the South Atlantic, with principal responsibility for safeguarding the Falklands and environs.

To keep the team on their toes – and to offer some moral support – a string of senior visitors climbed aboard to chat with the sailors: Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the UK National Hydrographer Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff and Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla Cdre Andrew Cameron.

Such visits remind the ship's company that they are not forgotten about more than 8,000 miles from the UK, but they were not the sole reminder of home aboard.

These days, most RN surface ships are blessed with 'creature comforts' few, if any, could have dreamed of barely a decade ago.

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extremes

Certainly HMS Nottingham's Commanding Officer is impressed. He's keeping a regular internet diary or 'blog' as a result of all this technological wizardry.

"I don't want to appear a dinosaur, but I am amazed by the levels of connectivity we have on board – instant email, internet and phone calls to the UK," Cdr Andrew Price writes.

"Not long ago, news from home was all down to the normal mail and letter drops. News from home now comes quickly – world news from the internet and satellite TV which is piped around the messdecks."

Satellite TV has allowed the team to keep up with the latest sporting events, such as the Six Nations, the soaps, and dare we say it 'reality' television.

"No longer do I need to consider closing land to ensure that we can receive a half-decent television picture and no longer is the deputy weapons engineering officer forced to stand out in the cold on the bridge roof, clutching a superbly-engineered aerial array of wire coat hangers, whilst orders to go 'up a bit, right a bit' are shouted through three decks to achieve the best picture," Cdr Price adds in his blog.

Email, internet and satellite TV are not the only morale boosters aboard, there's also Nottingham's PTI Kev 'The Baby Faced Assassin' (a moniker from his boxing days) Green to organise various sporting events, as well as numerous contests and competitions to maintain the 250 sailors at a peak of fitness, body and soul.

Both body and soul were in harmony when Kev organised a Sport Relief mile for the international charity. Sailors raised £200 by completing seven laps of the upper deck.

Not all runs had such a pleasant ending.

No, 11 members of the ship's company visited the RAF dog section at Mount Pleasant in the Falklands – and found themselves 'volunteered' for demonstrations.

The dogs and their handlers conduct patrols, look for explosives and carry out search and rescue missions on the islands.

Thanks to their speed, agility and, above all, bite, (the dogs, not the handlers...) they can also bring criminals to a halt.

The Falklands are not renowned for criminal activity, so step forward 11 volunteers (who just happened to be HMS Nottingham sailors) to play the part of ne'er-do-wells.

Not surprisingly, they weren't able to outrun the attack dogs (whose rather sharp teeth you will be pleased to learn did not penetrate the thick protective suits the volunteers wore).

■ Read Cdr Price's blog at www.blogs.mod.uk/hms_nottingham/



● Nottingham leaves the Falklands bound for South Georgia

Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU East





Grand entrance

THE Orion 08 deployment is now in full swing as task group flagship HMS Illustrious and her escort made their way through the Mediterranean and through the Suez Canal.

Lusty had been delayed in UK waters to complete training and undertake engineering work, but was soon following in the wake of other Orion warships.

Accompanied by destroyer HMS Edinburgh, the carrier was given a three-gun salute as she entered Grand Harbour in Valletta – her first visit to Malta since 2005.

Lusty's links with the island fortress date back to World War 2, when the fourth HMS Illustrious was badly damaged on convoy duties to the island.

Whilst being repaired she was subject to more air attacks which killed and injured many local people.

The links were commemorated on this visit by a twinning ceremony, in which Lusty presented a hunting horn to each of the Three Cities which stand on the southern side of

Grand Harbour – Senglea, Vittoriosa and Cospicua, the heartland of the old Naval dockyards.

The three horns reflect those on the carrier's badge.

A service of remembrance for victims of wartime bombing was held at the Senglea memorial, and chaplain Fr David Yates said: "Laying the wreath at the memorial was a very moving experience for everyone involved."

"I think it is very important that we, of the present HMS Illustrious, remember our history and the tremendous support the people of Malta gave to our forebears and continue to give us today."

Sailors also competed with Maltese teams and colleagues from HMS Edinburgh on the sports fields, while others managed a little sightseeing.

LLogs 'Pat' Garrett said: "I've been around the world and seen some amazing places, but I always love coming back to Malta. The lads and lasses are always made to feel welcome and have a great time."

There was also charity work to be done; water pipes were fixed and a site cleared in Senglea, railings painted outside council offices, and a party also helped out at an animal park.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Illustrious, Capt Steve Chick, said: "The visit was a great success. The ship's company always enjoy coming to Malta as they are so well received."

"It is very humbling for us all to hear the stories of 1941, and I think the twinning ceremony will be a lasting memory for all who took part."

The multinational Orion task group, commanded by Cdre Tom Cunningham, consists of 13 vessels and more than 2,500 people, and will exercise with naval forces in the Indian Ocean before heading back to the UK in late spring.

Among the ships attached to the task group for various stages of the deployment are HMS Westminster, Spanish frigate SNS Mendez Nuñez, French frigate FS Jean Bart and American destroyer USS Cole.

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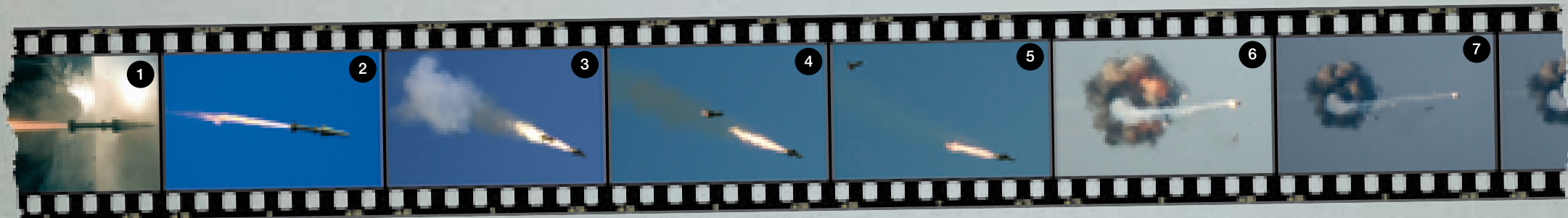
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● HMS Illustrious' starboard 20mm gun is fired during night gunnery exercises on the Orion 08 deployment



● HMS Edinburgh sails past the Valletta waterfront



Return of the big bad wolf



THIS is what happens when missile meets missile at a combined velocity of more than twice the speed of sound.

A drone target towed by a Falcon disintegrates as a Seawolf from HMS Westminster smashes into it low over the ocean.

Last month we featured successful Seawolf firings by HMS Somerset.

Well anything Somerset can do, her sister Westminster can do just as effectively.

Like Somerset, firing Seawolf was the final 'tick in the box' before Westminster was declared fully operational.

Unlike Somerset, we have a complete(ish) sequence of images charting Seawolf's destructive progress thanks to the photography of Lt Jon Wade and PO Bob Sharples, both of Westminster's 829 NAS flight.

Seawolf bursts out of its silo (1) (it's actually launched vertically, but the hole in the film strip was the wrong shape – Ed); races through the sky (2); the booster rocket drops away (3); Seawolf's secondary rocket motors kick in (4) and (5) to carry the missile towards its target at around Mach 2; and finally impact (6) and (7). It all lasts barely ten seconds.

Thanks to its two tracking radars, Seawolf can independently fire a salvo of missiles against two different targets.

With a drone being towed by a friendly aircraft, however, Seawolf was in human hands, not a computer's, for these test firings.

'Firing our Seawolf is always a privilege,' said Lt Cdr Mandy Miller, Westminster's Weapon Engineer Officer.

'It was very pleasing to have achieved our final preparation for the deployment in such style after much hard work from the whole team.'

Westminster is the anti-submarine escort for the Orion 08 deployment led by HMS Illustrious (see opposite), but she can also defend herself against aerial threats.

Should anything slip past Edinburgh's Sea Darts, Westminster's Seawolf missiles are the next line of defence for the carrier task group (the very last line is provided by Illustrious' Goalkeeper automated machine-guns).

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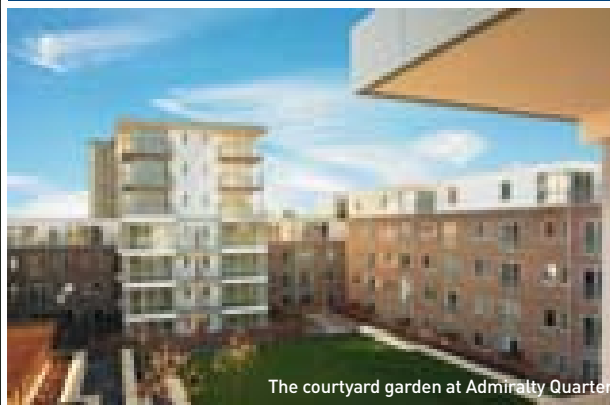
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Footlights and highlights

IF YOU were to walk east from Portsmouth, following the line of the shore like those chaps and chaperones of the TV programme *Coast*, you would not come across the home of a Royal Navy warship for a good while.

In fact, the name of the port might surprise you: Ipswich.

But the Suffolk town is home to HMS Raider, the small training and patrol craft which serves the various universities of East Anglia.

Raider is one of 14 Archer-class patrol craft attached to universities around the UK, aimed at introducing undergraduates to the world of the Senior Service – and giving them a bit of pocket money while studying.

Raider's offices can be found in Cambridge, but the University Royal Navy Unit also draws students from the University of East Anglia (Norwich) and Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge and Chelmsford).

Although one of the smallest vessels in the RN, Raider cannot get down the rivers of East Anglia to reach Cambridge – not without losing her masts and antennae at any rate (she can, however, navigate as far as Wisbech on the Nene).

The winter months are used for training and a spell in a yard on Tyneside for repairs and maintenance, but with spring comes the busy season once again.

Last year saw Raider deploy around the North Sea, visiting Holland, Belgium and Germany,



● HMS Raider races through Sandown Bay off the Isle of Wight on a fine spring day

crewed by her complement of full-time RN personnel and students, accompanied by her sister ship HMS Tracker, which serves Oxford University.

This year Raider has taken part in high-profile commemorations of the Channel Dash off Deal

and spent Easter sailing around Belgium and Holland with her students aboard.

Raider was commissioned a decade ago, replacing HMS Loyal Watcher as Cambridge URNU's dedicated vessel.

She is one of two Batch 2 orders

for Archer-class boats (Tracker was the other); one notable feature of these improved Archers is their more powerful engines, allowing her to reach speeds of up to 25kts, not 20kts like her older sisters.

Two previous Raiders have hoisted the White Ensign.

The first HMS Raider was a Great War R-class destroyer which served for 11 years.

The second Raider had a particularly distinguished career in the Mediterranean and Far East.

All the ship's battle honours were earned by the second Raider

– while her ship's company earned four Distinguished Service Medals and five Mentions in Dispatches.

She was sold to the Indian Navy after World War 2 and served her new owners admirably as INS Rana until 1976 before being broken up.



Arctic..... 1942-43
Sicily..... 1943
Salerno..... 1943
Mediterranean 1943
Sabang 1944
East Indies 1944
Burma..... 1944-45

Class: Archer class patrol and training vessel (batch 2)

Pennant number: P275
Builder: Ailsa, Troon
Commissioned: January 1988

Displacement: 54 tons
Length: 20.8 metres
Beam: 5.8 metres
Draught: 1.8 metres
Speed: 25 knots
Complement: 11
Propulsion: 2 x MTU
Diesels generating 2,000hp
Range: 550 miles at 15kt
Armament: Fitted for but not with 1 x Oerlikon 20mm

Serves: Cambridge, University of East Anglia and Anglia Ruskin University
Based: Ipswich

Battle Honours

Facts and figures

WIN BEER FOR A YEAR WITH HELP FOR HEROES SPITFIRE ALE

Britain's oldest brewer, Shepherd Neame, has created a limited edition Help for Heroes Spitfire Ale to raise funds for the charity Help for Heroes.

Help for Heroes is a new national charity which aids members of the armed forces who return wounded from tours of duty. The charity is working hard to raise funds to build a gym and swimming pool at the Defence Medical Services Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court, Epsom, Surrey.

Navy News and Help for Heroes have teamed up to give you the chance to win one of the two prizes of 288 25cl bottles of Help for Heroes Spitfire Ale. Answer the simple question below and get your entry off today.

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HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.48

Capt Bernard Armitage Warburton Warburton-Lee VC

AS night fell on Berlin on Tuesday April 9 1940, Joseph Goebbels was feeling rather self-satisfied.

That very day German forces had occupied key points in Norway and Denmark under the very noses of the British. "This is a gift from the Gods," the Nazi propagandist screamed in his diary. "Churchill was expecting news of the English invasion – and those damned Germans had got there first."

Hubs is almost inevitably followed by remoras. In the home of the *Seefregatten*, the German Naval War Staff, a short distance from the Propaganda Ministry, there was no gloating.

The mood was a mixture of anxiety and relief. The Kriegsmarine's losses that Tuesday had been "grave" but also "in proportion to the risk run". They would only grow heavier, the Chief-of-Staff Otto Schniewind feared, poring over the radio messages, maps and reconnaissance forces. "Powerful and superior British and French naval forces" were mustering in the North Sea. They would strike before dawn.

As Goebbels gloated and Schniewind fretted, Capt Bernard Armitage Warburton Warburton-Lee conferred with the senior officers of his 2nd Destroyer Flotilla aboard his flagship HMS Hardy in the Vestfjord.

The Germans had landed at Narvik that morning. The Admiralty demanded them dislodged – but no had no idea how strong the enemy was. "You alone can judge whether attack should be made. We shall support whatever decision you take," Whitehall signalled the destroyer captain.

After conferring with his commanders, Warburton-Lee withdrew to his cabin and pondered the fate of his force of five destroyers. His mind made up, he emerged and ordered a signal sent to London: "Inland attacking at dawn."

Furries of snow mingled with the Arctic fog as Warburton-Lee charged towards the iron ore port of Narvik. His guns opened fire, taking the sleeping Germans entirely by surprise.

The flagship *Wilhelm Heintz* was crippled, torpedoes from Hardy smashed into the destroyer *Anton Schmitt*, breaking her in two. She capsized and sank in a flash.

Shells rained down on a third German destroyer; the blooms ashore around the narrow fjord sides. Tankers and merchant ships were damaged or wrecked.

And then Warburton-Lee and his force retired to regroup.

It had been a classic destroyer action, but Warburton-Lee chanced his luck and returned to pound the battered German force.

And here his luck ran out, for five hitherto unseen enemy destroyers emerged from the fjords. Trying to escape for the open sea Hardy was hit by successive salvos.

One wiped out the entire bridge team, killing or wounding every man. More smashed the engine room. Hardy was beached, her crew waded and swam ashore.

Suffering terrible head wounds, Bernard Warburton-Lee briefly rallied and stood up, pointing to the shore. His comrades carefully carried him off the ship and on to a raft, but he died before he reached dry land.

The final signal hoisted by the 44-year-old Scotsman was typical of his dash and nerve: Keep on engaging the enemy.

Warburton-Lee would become the first galleon naval VC of World War 2 (Gerard Roope earned his posthumously three days before, but it would be 1945 before his deeds were appreciated by his nation).

He had, said his citation, shown "gallantry, enterprise and daring in command". Half the German invasion force at Narvik had been damaged or destroyed for the loss of two British destroyers.

He was laid to rest in Ballangen cemetery in Norway; his grave is regularly adorned by wreaths laid by British sailors who return to these waters most winters on exercise.





To the ends of the earth

THE end of March was the start of something new for Commando Helicopter Force squadron, 845 NAS, who left their home base of Yeovilton behind to head out for the first time to the dry mountains of Afghanistan.

The Sea Kings of 845 have joined with their sister squadron 846 in the landlocked nation to take on the support helicopter role for the coalition forces.

Preparations for deployment take long enough under normal circumstances, but 845 NAS have had to squeeze a lot of work into a short amount of time – they only returned from Iraq four months and three days prior to heading out to Afghanistan on their latest operational stint in a new theatre.

Of course, as we reported last month, the HC4 Sea Kings had to be beefed up with a new design of rotor blades and tail rotor, avionics, radio and defensive aids suite. A comprehensive package of engineering and technical work that earned them the new title of HC4+.

Lt Ben McGreal said: "This work, running alongside other commitments elsewhere, placed

immense demands upon the engineers on the squadron.

"But working to an exceptionally tight schedule that left no margin for error, they did a sterling job to get the first batch aircraft ready to deploy on time."

And it was not just the machinery that had to be prepared for the new environment, as the men and women of 845 NAS had barely returned to British shores before they packed their bags and headed out to the cold of Norway for the annual Clockwork training in Bardufoss.

Lt McGreal said: "Even before extraction from Iraq, some elements of the squadron began survival training in Bardufoss."

"In early January most of the squadron joined them in northern Norway to conduct a specially-designed extreme cold weather flying course."

"Whilst it may seem strange to deploy to the frozen north of the Arctic Circle to conduct pre-deployment training for the desert, the re-circulating snow, mountains and brutal challenge of operating aircraft in extreme conditions provided exceptional training for Afghanistan."

There was little rest for the

members of C Flight on return from Norway, as they plunged headfirst into pre-deployment training, learning about the country in which they would soon be operating.

"This involved numerous lectures on the country, the threat, time on the range honing our weapon skills and eye-watering talks from the medics on what the local wildlife could do to the unsuspecting or lazy matelots," added Lt McGreal.

"For the aircrew there was an intense flying package designed to simulate the conditions, threats and mission pressure they were going to experience in country."

"This meant a lot of flying as well as crew contact drills designed to ensure that the aircrew knew what to do should they find themselves on the ground in Taliban-held territory."

Cdr Matt Briers, commanding officer of 845 NAS, commented: "Every single member of 845 NAS has worked exceptionally hard following our withdrawal from combat operations in Iraq to ensure the squadron is ready for this new challenge."

"The effort required to concurrently recover aircraft from Basra,

modify others to the HC4+ standard, conduct cold climate training and prepare people for a new war has been huge."

"That we have achieved this has been down to the commitment of each and every member of the squadron."

He concluded: "I am immensely privileged to command such people and know they will do a first-class job in theatre as everyone is relishing the chance to get involved and show what 845 NAS and the Commando Helicopter Force will do."

The arrival of 845 NAS in

theatre alongside 846 NAS will double the number of CHF personnel on Op Herrick, operating as part of the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan).

The Lynx aircraft of 847 NAS are programmed to join their Sea King cousins in CHF later this year, meaning that the Fleet Air Arm will be the largest British military operator of aircraft in theatre.

● (top) The aurora borealis is a dramatic backdrop for the Sea Kings of 845 NAS

● (below) Cold weather training for 845 NAS aircrew in Norway



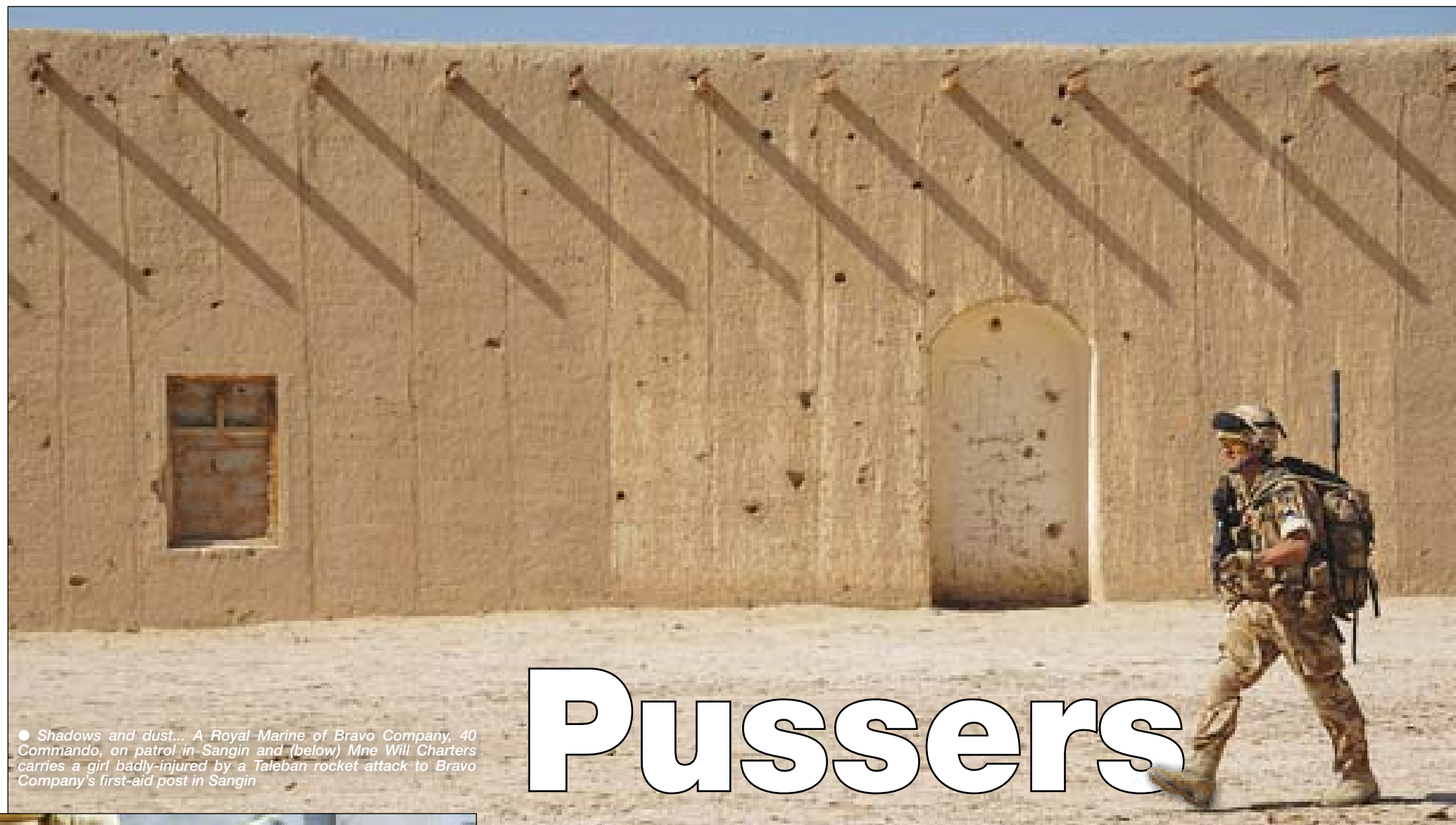


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● Shadows and dust... A Royal Marine of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, on patrol in Sangin and (below) Mne Will Charters carries a girl badly-injured by a Taliban rocket attack to Bravo Company's first-aid post in Sangin

Pussers



IF ANYWHERE in Afghanistan epitomises the odious nature of Taliban, it is the market town of Sangin.

For a decade, Sangin was a Taliban stronghold in name and nature. It was a heartland of fundamentalism, a hotbed of the opium trade, the last outpost of Taliban rule.

Yet if anywhere in Afghanistan epitomises what can be achieved in the absence of that evil regime, it is Sangin.

The Royal Marines of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, are the guardians of Sangin. Their comrades from the Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team are the catalysts for its regeneration.

When the Taliban held sway in Sangin, normal life came to a halt. The market withered. The school closed. Only religious instruction was permitted under the fundamentalist regime.

Stagnation was compounded by destruction as fighting raged about the town.

"People had forgotten what Sangin should be like," said Capt Andy Goldsmith, head of 40 Commando's specialist Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team in the town.

"Now we are finally starting to

see progress that people can buy into, and the feedback we are getting is very encouraging."

The authorities have a ten-year plan for the town, aided by the protection offered by Bravo Company, 40 Commando.

That protection has seen people return to Sangin in their droves (more than five million people have returned to Afghanistan from neighbouring states since the Taliban were ousted).

The bazaar now thrives once again. Teams of workers are clearing the rubble of buildings destroyed in the fighting for Sangin and a new tarmac road will soon be laid to the town's school.

That school was also damaged in the skirmishes – but the real damage was done long before, when the Taliban ruled the town.

Under their rule, girls aged eight and over were forbidden an education; those under eight could learn only the Qur'an. Female teachers were sacked. Anyone who broke these laws faced execution.

Although the Taliban were eventually driven from Sangin, their baleful influence has sadly

persisted.

Teachers remain wary of returning to school – they and their pupils still face intimidation from die-hard fundamentalists.

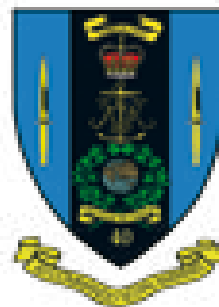
Mercifully, the desire to learn has proved too strong in the face of ignorance and repression.

Gurkha engineers helped to re-build part of the ten-classroom school – enough has been restored for lessons to resume for both girls and boys, with 65 children already on the school's books.

"We cannot underestimate the effect of hearing the sound of children playing in the school again," said Lt Pete Ryan, part of the CIMIC team.

"Many of the children have never been to school, but now they can pursue an education with confidence."

The school is, perhaps understandably, rather austere and lacking in almost all the basics which Britain's youngsters take for granted.



Thanks to efforts by children in 40 Commando's home town, some colour will return to the lives of Sangin's youths.

Pupils at Queen's College junior school in Taunton are donating sports equipment, drawings and art work and simple equipment so the school in Sangin can get back on its feet.

"It's fantastic that the pupils have taken this opportunity to exchange some of their artwork with the children of Sangin," said Capt Mark Elliott, 40 Cdo's adjutant – and a former Queen's College pupil.

"This adds a great new dimension to all the efforts that have been put into the area over the last four months."

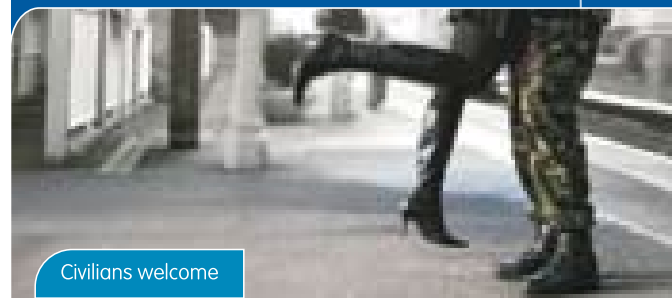
Education will hopefully destroy the Taliban's roots and prevent them taking hold again in the future. For the present, the drugs trade is their lifeblood and Sangin was the epicentre of southern Afghanistan's opium market, followed by Musa Qaleh to the north.

The people grappling



Attention!

- looking for companionship?
- searching for that special someone?
- or just good friends?



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I WORK in the Force Movements Control Centre and am responsible for the physical movement of passengers, mail and cargo within theatre, be that by road or air.

We are responsible for the surface lines of communication from Karachi to Kandahar or Kabul and air lines of communication within country.

I run the tactical air desks, ensuring that the theatre freight movement priorities list is adhered to as well as moving passengers and of course the ever important mail.

My main effort is currently focussed on the Relief in Place (RiP), where 16 Air Assault Brigade replaces 52 Brigade. This started on March 6 and will move 12,400 passengers between UK and Afghanistan.

This requires careful planning to ensure that the right number of passengers are allocated to each RAF Tristar, the strategic aircraft used to move all military passengers into theatre, and then the right number of C130 Hercules are available to move passengers

THE National Support Command HQ in Kandahar provides logistics, administrative, medical and personnel support to all UK troops throughout Afghanistan. At its heart is a 12-strong team of Royal Navy logisticians, writes the Deputy Commander, Capt David Marsh.

We sit alongside our RAF and Army counterparts in the Joint Force Support Headquarters. Beyond the more usual personnel, medical and joint supply chain responsibilities, the team is now involved in new areas such as

theatre container management, management of local contracts with Afghan contractors and the movement of stores, personnel and much more throughout this landlocked country.

I am delighted to report that the team is making a significant impact in Operation Herrick and enjoying the challenge enormously. This might seem an unlikely destination for the RN Logistics Branch but we stand ready to continue with this commitment for the foreseeable future. I will let a selection of the team tell their own story.

forward to Camp Bastion (the main UK base in Helmand) and beyond – so as you can see, I will be fairly busy.

Being in the centre is a very rewarding job which provides me with professional experience outside of the norm and I would strongly recommend this job to any RN logistician wishing to broaden their military and professional logistics knowledge.

– Lt Cdr Gary Manning

WHO would have imagined after 20 years in the RN that I would be in the middle of a desert in a landlocked country wearing desert camouflage uniform? Well that's

exactly what has happened. I'm now based at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.

It's a Joint HQ and I'm in the J1 Branch – J1 looks after people – where we provide personnel and administrative support to all UK soldiers, sailors and airmen on Herrick, some 8,000 people, including 140 RN and 770 RM.

Already I have travelled to Camp Bastion, Lashkar Gar and Kabul, including frisky flights over the desert in Army Lynx, C130 hops, squeezing into the back of Saxons and driving through the streets of Kabul in armoured Landcruisers.

There are a huge range of personnel issues, ranging from the

strategic, where I ensure policies such as the Operational Welfare Package reaches our Forward Operating Bases, to the deeply tactical, where I take a personal interest in the welfare of specific individual cases where extra support is required.

And most importantly there is the genuine ability to make a difference. I've had my fair share of challenge, responsibility and variety during my career in the RN, but this job takes the biscuit – for anyone out there who is interested, if you get the chance I recommend that you grab the opportunity.

It's hard work and you need to keep on your toes – but it's worth

● *Rolling thunder... Clouds of dust are kicked up by Royal Marine Vikings of the Armoured Support Company as they roar over the sandy terrain near Melmand*

Pictures: LA(Phot) 'AJ' Macleod, 40 Commando



‘n’ booties

The insurgents were driven out of the latter town last year after ferocious fighting. Reports suggested some fled to the village of Sapwan Kala, outside Sangin. If there was any doubt of the link between drugs and the Taliban, it was dispelled when Bravo Company entered the village during Operation Ghartse Dagger.

Conversations with locals suggested a series of compounds served as a drugs factory.

They did. They found a set-up intended to manufacture heroin on an industrial scale.

The Royals discovered more than 1½ tons of morphine base – used to produce heroin – plus sacks of chemicals, presses, ID cards, bank statements (some in English) and weapons.

“I can understand local people growing poppies because the economy here is limited and they need to make a living and feed their families,” said Maj Dan Cheesman, Officer Commanding Bravo Company.

“The drugs factory was a case of the greedy, not the needy, however.

“Intelligence increasingly indicates that the Taliban and the

narcotics industry are in cahoots – where we find one, we find the other.”

Neither greedy nor needy will ever use it again. Gurkha engineers attached to 40 Commando levelled the compounds.

The destruction of the drugs factory was followed by the second phase of Ghartse Dagger, an armoured thrust into the town of Melmand, east of Sangin.

The Royals in their Vikings were accompanied by Danes in their Piranha armoured vehicles, safeguarded overhead by an umbrella of Apache gunships.

There was no resistance; the Taliban melted away, allowing the Allies to drive into Malmand unopposed.

“Having dominated the Upper Sangin Valley for five months, it’s become clear that the Taliban are running out of safe havens,” said Maj Cheesman.

“We are now going out further than we have before – the principle being that we pick fights on our terms rather than waiting for them to come to us.”

In fleeing once again, the insurgents left behind weapons, drugs and items used to make suicide bomber vests.

Despite these thrusts into Taliban country, the fundamentalists are still here, somewhere.

A distressed Afghani appeared at the gates of Bravo Company’s headquarters in Sangin.

His two girls had been badly wounded by a rocket attack – an indiscriminate response by Taliban fighters to a patrol by the green berets.

First to respond to the pleas was Mne Will Charters, who carried one of the girls to the sick bay.

“I’ve seen casualties before, but it’s horrible when children are involved,” he said.

Medics at Sangin provided emergency aid to stabilise the children, while a Chinook flew in from Camp Bastion to take them to the main field hospital in Helmand.

There surgeons saved both girls’ lives; one, however, lost an arm, the second remains in a serious condition with head wounds.

“What happened to these girls is tragic, but it’s the reality of fighting against people who don’t care who they attack,” lamented Mne Martin McCaffrey, Bravo Company’s medic who administered vital aid while waiting for the Chinook.



● *Maj Jez Stemp RM directs Viking operations from the turret of his armoured vehicle*

with the FOB of war

it. To be up close with what UK Forces are doing out here is an impressive and often humbling experience. It’s reminded me why I joined up all those years ago.”

– Cdr Craig Mearns

“AS Lieutenant Commander Medical Operations in the Headquarters I am responsible for the day-to-day management of medical support to UK operations in Afghanistan.

In simple terms this means I need to be the ‘jack’ of all medical trades. I work closely to coordinate the UK medical effort and I am the HQ focal point for ensuring medical support of operations.

I even get to dabble with medical planning every now and again, working closely with the UK Joint Force Medical Group in Bastion which is responsible for delivering enhanced medical care in the recently-opened hospital that replaced the previous tented one.

As you can imagine it is extremely busy providing healthcare to at least the same standard, if not better than the

NHS back in the UK.

Issues surrounding medical logistics land on my desk and I am required to liaise with the Logistic Support section to ensure the smooth management of medical resupply (we’re all loggies here). ”

– Lt Cdr Al Murray

“AS part of the Logistic Operations cell, I manage the priority and movement of equipment in order to meet the operational requirements, essentially ensuring there is a bang not a click when the soldier fires his weapon.

The equipment we move ranges from large armoured vehicles, aviation equipment, ammunition, medical supplies, engineering stores and material to the more unexpected requirements such as air-conditioned dog kennels. We move equipment using local national trucks (known as ‘jinglies’), by C130 Hercules between Kandahar, Bastion and Kabul and by ‘combat logistics patrols’ across Kandahar and Helmand to all the major Forward Operating Bases (FOBs).

To re-supply our forward locations we also use Chinook support helicopters and we are currently introducing a contract civilian helicopter which has started operating a ‘milk round’ of the Helmand FOBs.

Finally we have air despatch for those ‘impossible to reach’ locations.

This job could not be done in isolation as it combines Army logistics and RAF movements with an RN Officer (me!) acting as the conduit to tie it all together.

I also have a secondary responsibility as the ‘theatre container manager’ and, as you can imagine, we have an awful lot of containers both here on the ground and somewhere between Felixstowe, Karachi and Helmand.”

– Lt Rachael Cunnell

“There is no doubt that the Logistic Support Branch (termed J4) is the heart beat of any logistics HQ and I have the role of co-ordinating the outputs of the various combat supplies desk officers as they make best use of 1st (front line), 2nd (Camp Bastion)

and 3rd-line stocks (in Kandahar or the UK) – to sustain UK Forces and our embedded nations across southern Afghanistan.

At the higher level, estimates on fuel and water requirements or the logistic impact of supporting other nations operating in Helmand, for example, have in this truly expeditionary and logistically-fragile part of the world, occupied much of our time.

At the more immediate end of the spectrum, during ‘the middle watch’ we have been making calls on whether to authorise an emergency air drop to sustain NATO regional operations to the north of Kandahar or move high-priority equipment forward from Kandahar to Bastion.

Neither circumstance, I hasten to add, was a product of bad logistical planning but a response to the pace of change on operations and the hostile environment.

Daily engagement with the other Services, coalition nations and organisations to deliver logistic effect is always interesting, hugely rewarding and even fun.”

– Lt Cdr Charles Evans

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Kings of the mountains

IT'S often the simplest things which make the greatest impact.

A large map of Scotland posted on the wall is peppered with small numbered pins. Up and up go the numbers. They stop at 357.

In places, the figures cluster – around Ben Nevis and Glencoe especially.

For it is there that the men and women of HMS Gannet are at home.

There are 'wet jobs' – rescues in the Clyde, over the Irish Sea, even out in the Atlantic. They are the exception not the rule.

"The mountains are our bread and butter," says Lt Cdr Martin Lanni, Gannet's second-in-command.

His boss nods. "Our *raison d'être* is mountain rescue. That's what makes us different from any other RN unit," says Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas, Gannet's Commanding Officer.

Indeed it does. But shouldn't naval aviators be touching down on the back of a frigate rolling on the high seas, ferrying commandos around in the swirling dust of Afghanistan or plucking trawlermen from sinking fishing vessels in the Channel?

Ah, thereby lies a tale.

It grew from the need to rescue downed fliers from Britain's waters – although it was very much a secondary role for squadrons typically dedicated to anti-submarine warfare. And the secondary role soon became the principal one; the UK has a legal obligation to rescue those in trouble in its waters.

Those waters lie a relative stone's throw away from Gannet's home on the edge of Prestwick international airport, near Ayr.

But the seas are safer than the hills and mountains less than an hour's flying time to the north... where that bread and butter is earned.

It's not just the airmen who earn their bread and butter here. The aviators rely on the invaluable local knowledge of mountain rescue teams. Uniquely, once a casualty has been carried off a mountainside to safety, the Sea King invariably returns to pick up the rescue teams.

Sitting here in a nice, well comfortable, office in HMS



Nowhere away from the battlefield is more dangerous for aviators. And no aviators are busier than the men and women of HMS Gannet. RICHARD HARGREAVES spent a day with Britain's No.1 Search And Rescue unit.

Nelson, it all sounds so routine. Take off, pick up a mountain rescue team, pick up the victim, take them to hospital, return for rescue team, take them home, return to base.

It is, of course, anything but. "The weather you see out of the window here is not the same as up in the mountains," imparts Lt Cdr Nicholas.

And the weather – the swirling winds and gusts racing down the glens and lochs and over the peaks, the snow, the driving rain, the sleet, the infamous Scottish mist – is only one half of the challenge in the mountains.

There is the constant danger of a 'tip strike' – of the rotor blades striking a crag or rock face as the helicopter manoeuvres to conduct a rescue. Add the complication of darkness or poor visibility and you begin to see why senior officers regarded Search and Rescue as the most challenging flying away from the battlefield.

It is also probably the most high-profile. Few months go by without some rescue or other making the headlines.

The men and women of Gannet would never regard themselves as heroes – that word tritely bandied about by journalists. Nor are they adrenaline junkies or people living for death or glory. Nor again, though, is this an ordinary occupation.

"This is a 'life and death' job," says Lt Cdr Stuart 'Spike' Pike. "But it's also a balancing act. We do not rush into a rescue with both feet. There's no bravado in this career."

"But there are times when you realise that someone has lived because of what we've done – and that's very satisfying."

Most missions conclude with

that "very satisfying" feeling. But this is not Hollywood. There is not always a happy ending.

"There are occasions when you want to help but circumstances won't allow you," explains Lt Cdr Nicholas. "When the tug capsized in the Clyde recently we were hovering along the river at 20ft but in the end we had to give up because of the fog."

"Saying 'no' is the most difficult thing we can do. It's not something we say lightly."

It is not always the weather which is beyond the crew's control.

"I never realised how much was involved in a heart transplant until we had to fly a harvest team to Fort William in atrocious conditions," says Spike.

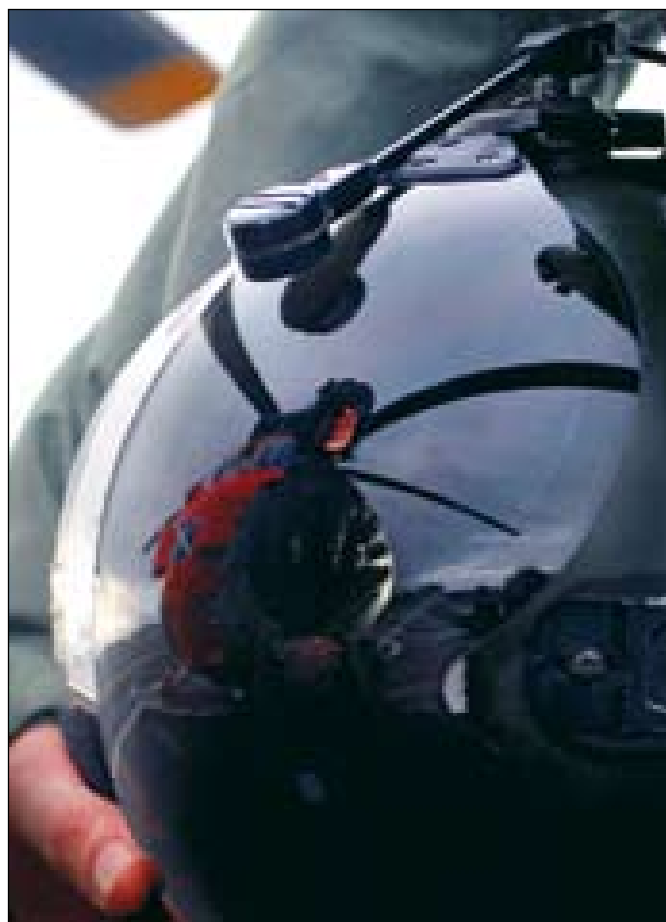
"That call came at the end of a 20-hour day when we'd flown five missions. We got there, but it was too late. It was quite a sad ending – we'd done everything we could, but it wasn't enough."

Unlike other emergency services, the Search and Rescue teams suffer few, if any, hoax calls; when the Sea King scrambles there's a genuine need or, rarely, someone is genuinely mistaken.

And most rescues are victims of circumstance. Generally speaking, they do not rashly set off into the hills and mountains, ill-prepared or ill-equipped – although the weather can often catch them out. No amount of planning and precaution, however, can prevent that stumble over a rock, that fall, that slip which forces them to call for help.

That call for help is becoming considerably more easy... which means considerably more call-outs for Gannet.

"People are using their mobile phones more – in the past they might have hobbled down a mountain. Now they give us a call," says Spike. On the plus side,



● **Reflecting on a hectic year... A Gannet cab and one of its crew as seen through the glare of a helmet** Picture: LA(Phot) Del Trotter, FRPU Clyde

the rescuers can at least get an accurate fix on someone's location courtesy of their phones.

To those rescued, the winchman – the 'dope on a rope' as colleagues affectionately refer to them – is the knight in shining armour (or dayglo flying suit).

"Best job in the world. Love it," says LACMN Kev Regan, a gift-of-the-gab Scouser.

"One minute you're on top of Ben Nevis, the next you're over a fishing vessel."

"It's a very challenging job, but it's also a pretty satisfying one. If you are the only person who can help – and you did help – then it gives you a warm feeling."

Kev is a 'jungle' veteran,

who underwent an eight-week conversion course to learn the art of precision winching, as well as receiving medical instruction. And one thing is worth stressing: aircrewmembers are not rescue swimmers. They do not intentionally leap into a raging sea to pluck a mariner to safety.

"Being in jungles was good, but there you train for what could happen and often doesn't, whereas here you what you are trained to do on a daily basis," he says.

The winchman may be the epitome of Search and Rescue in the public's mind, but ask anyone at Gannet and they'll tell you it's a team effort.

"You rely on everybody doing

their job," says Spike. "The guy on the winch relies on the pilots following the observer's instructions."

There are four crew in each SAR Sea King – two pilots, the observer on the radar, the aircrewman on the winch. Given the locations and conditions these helicopters fly in, two pilots are essential (unlike Junglies, which normally fly with one, for example).

"It's an exhausting job – you have to monitor all things at all times, there's no real autopilot," says Spike. "It's also noisy, it vibrates constantly and there's no heating."

The weather, the hills and mountains, the ships swinging and rocking, rising and falling violently, conspire to make this one of the most dangerous job not merely in the Fleet Air Arm or RN, but UK plc.

"You are always geared up for coming home, but you are also prepared for something going wrong," Spike explains.

"You cannot, of course, let it dominate your thoughts, but you do have to think: how will I get out of this? If you get stuck somewhere, no-one is going to rescue you. Who rescues the rescuers?"

The flip side of this coin is that, as Lt Cdr Lanni says, "in peace time there's no better flying. A senior visitor described it as the most challenging flying outside Afghanistan."

But in Afghanistan, you probably don't get a red helicopter sketched in crayon, pinned to the message board outside the CO's office. It's a token of gratitude from one of the 70-plus Scottish schools the Sea Kings drop in on each year.

There are other notes of appreciation, too.

"I am very relieved that this rather unfortunate incident occurred in an area where help was near at hand," writes Clare Strain, rescued from a hill on the Holy Isle.

And from Sue Bradley from Lancaster, who called for help on the slopes of Ben Nevis: "I truly shudder to think how things might have been without such a dedicated group who are willing to help people who find themselves in difficulty."

SAR performance

IN A fairly small-scale organisation – there are just 12 Search and Rescue units in the UK – the Royal Navy makes up the smallest part – two dedicated units; the Coastguard and RAF provide the remainder.

Indeed, HMS Gannet is one of the smallest dark blue enclaves in the UK. Uniformed personnel total little more than 30; total staff numbers just break the 100 barrier.

There's no wardroom here (but there is the Elvis Bar, made from a bit of bowling lane apparently used by The King when he passed through Prestwick nearly 50 years ago), no junior or senior rates' mess.

Indeed, driving through a village on the edge of the airfield I'm convinced the 'RNAS Prestwick' sign on the roundabout must be wrong.

The road is lined by homes, aircraft hangars and sheds. But then there's the giveaway: the White Ensign fluttering in the stiff breeze on a mast.

This is the sole Fleet Air Arm presence north of the border. If you want to find another whirlybird with the letters ROYAL NAVY emblazoned on the side, you have to fly 320 miles south to Yeovilton.

Gannet's domain does not stretch quite that far, mercifully. It is vast, nevertheless – there is none vaster among the UK's dozen SAR units: 98,000 square miles of land and sea.

A piece of string with markers every ten miles fixed firmly into Prestwick by a pin allows the fliers to instantly work out roughly how far their destination is when that call to scramble comes.

The SAR Sea King HAS 5 has an endurance of about five hours – covering roughly anywhere

within a 200-mile radius of Gannet. That gives the aircrew about 30 minutes "on scene".

One Sea King sits on the tarmac at 15 minutes' notice to move by day, 45 minutes by night. Disappointingly, when the call to scramble comes, there's no fireman's pole to slither down (*probably because they're not firemen – Ed*).

"You spend 99 per cent of the time sitting in the crew room," says Spike.

"But when that call comes in, you have two or three, perhaps five, minutes to plan a mission."

There are times, however, when you can prepare yourself mentally in advance – such as when you know a storm is brewing. Gannet has a small meteorological team who provide daily weather briefings for the flight and also Faslane, BUTEC (the underwater warfare testing range near the Kyle of Lochalsh) and 45 Commando.

But not every call-out is provoked by the weather; there's a strong cluster of numbered pins driven into the map around Rothesay (pop. 6,000) on the Isle of Bute (it's not a place which draws mountaineers, but it is a place where women in labour need ferrying to the mainland).

For NHS duties, the Navy can charge the relevant health authority; for rescues there is no charge, whether it is the individual's fault or not.

SAR is an expensive business. Fuel isn't cheap. Aircrew are neither cheap to train nor cheap to pay. And then there's the aircraft. It's not cheap to buy. It's not cheap to maintain either.

Sea King is old. The first ones entered service four decades ago. The last ones rolled off the production line in 1990.

With age comes increased maintenance. For every hour in the air, a Sea King devours

around 40 'man hours' on the ground from its engineers.

They are not AETs and AEMs, but messieurs; support organisation Serco, not Fleet Air Arm engineers look after the 'birds' – although many of the civvies are former RN Sea King maintainers.

"We're here 24 hours a day, just like the aircraft and just like the aircrew," explains Hugh Shand, site engineering manager (and a former matelot).

"The aircraft expect to fly about 1,500 hours a year, so they get a service every night. You just need to give them a bit more TLC."

Sea King is tried and tested technology. So too is the 'sea search' radar which the flight observer uses in the back of the cab. It will pick out ships, buoys, cliffs. It will not pick up aircraft. Nor people.

For that there is the Mark I eyeball, aided in the dark by night vision goggles – a vital piece of kit the naval SAR teams didn't have a decade ago. But they are not a panacea. They do not turn night into day.

They need some natural light to aid them; without you get 'scintillation' (picture the fuzz you get on your TV when you lose your signal. Now imagine it being green). The goggles are also heavy; the aircrew only wear them for short periods when they're over the rescue scene.

The goggles are today's and tomorrow's technology. Sea King is very much yesteryear – but the Search and Rescue variant is not due to be phased out for another decade.

By then, however, SAR in the UK will look very different. From 2012 onwards, one contractor will take over the entire operation; it will call upon a core of 66 military pilots.

Whether Gannet is still here then is a decision for the future. Until that day, its men and women will make decisions daily. And theirs truly are a matter of life and death.



● **A winchman is hauled up into one of Gannet's Sea Kings**

Picture: WO1 Ian Arthur, FRPU Clyde



● A breath of fresh Ayr... Gannet's on-call Sea King conducts training near The Cobbler
Picture: LA(Phot) Del Trotter, FRPU Clyde

Like a muppet on a string...

YOU can see the attraction.

There is a wonderfully bleak beauty to this landscape.
Grouse dash up the slopes. Squirrels scurry between the bushes. Water rushes down gullies, tumbling over boulders, crashing into pools below.
It's clear why its beloved by climbers and hillwalkers.
But not today.
I may have written previously that it wasn't particularly bad north of the border in 2007.
Allow me to retract that statement right now.
For while it's a bright, if blustery, day at Prestwick, there's a storm raging amid the peaks and glens of Argyll.
At 2,000ft, the wind is gusting up to 50mph. Thanks to the skill of the pilots, you don't notice it too much in the back of the cab.
But stare out of the side door and you'll see horizontal sleet shooting past.
The pilot's not happy with the wind. Nor is LACMN Kev Regan. He fires an orange flare on to the mountainside around The Cobbler, a peak

rising 881 metres (2,900ft) above Loch Long. It's a common practice area for the Gannet team.
The flare fizzles for a few seconds before clouds of orange smoke billow and then hastily disperse and merge with the murk – revealing just how strong the wind is out there.
“I'm not happy with this,” says Lt Cdr Lanni. “What about that rock over there?”
That rock over there.
To the uninitiated every rock, every little outcrop, every boulder surrounded by tufts of grass and piles of soft snow looks identical.
But these mountain men know their domain. That rock is different from this rock.
“Happy with that,” says Kev.
The Sea King spins around the valley once, twice, perhaps three times as the flight crew assess wind speed and direction.
There's no point winching in perfect conditions off a nice, safe ledge.
This is a training mission – the duty crew The winchman goes down first to show how it's done. Then it's time for the real dope on a rope...
Kev explains what is expected of me. Something to do with rock, mountainside, and avoiding the

tree. It's hard to understand above the roar of the Sea King's engines, which are also belching Avcat No.5 into the back of the helicopter.
Man is not meant to fly. And if he is, then he should stay in the vehicle at all times.
So while what I'm about to do is bread and butter for the Gannet guys, it's positively barking mad to a deskbound civvy (*Think Inaction Man – Ed*).
Who in their right mind hangs on a piece of wire less than an inch thick 3,000ft above a loch in a blizzard?
Kev hooks me up to the winch lead then moves to the motor lever; arrows next to it handily explain 'up' and 'down' – “so the Royals know how to use it”.
First, very briefly, it's up and then it's down.
And once clear of the helicopter it's a wonderfully serene feeling – a bit like gliding or parachuting, with all God's wonders laid out before you: the valley, the craggy mountain tops, the wisps of grass, the rather weather-beaten trees. Arrochar nestles at the foot of the valley.
But this is not a smooth ride. The winch lurches. It spins. One minute you're facing the valley, the next the mountainside.

Nor do you drop vertically. You fall at an angle. You have no control. You are entirely in the hands of the men and women in the helicopter. You have no means of communication, save the odd hand signal.
Apparently, I was supposed to land on the side of mountain and walk down it, still attached to the winch, before being winched back up again.
Simple.
The only words to enter that pea-sized brain in my head evidently were ‘winch’, ‘down’, ‘rock’, ‘back again’.
So for a couple of minutes, I bump along the damp grass, spin around, bump some more, look up at the helicopter, think “that's a long way up”, and scrape along the rock, buckling my legs.
Clearly Kev realises he's dealing with an idiot, and flicks the 'up' lever on the winch.
It's all been a rather serene experience. But then it's not been a matter of life and death. No bones broken. No hypothermia setting in. No fog or mist shrouding the peaks.
But like all they have rescued before, I'm grateful to plonk myself down on the floor of the Sea King.



● A Girl Guide learns about radio at the RN Amateur Radio Society in HMS Collingwood

A Guide to the airwaves

'THINKING day on the air' drew Girl Guides and Brownies to HMS Collingwood to meet with the radio experts of the RN Amateur Radio Society, whose headquarters is appropriately enough in the Maritime Warfare School.

The girls made use of the radio equipment to make contact with other Guides and Brownies across the UK, and learn about mapping contacts and the use of the phonetic alphabet.

Morse code was taught in an unusual way as the girls spelt out their names on biscuits using icing paste and sweets.

The Senior Rates mess at Collingwood have also been making an effort to make life easier for local children.

The mess donated £1,000 to the Heathfield School in Fareham, which helps children with moderate learning disabilities.

PO Simon 'Nobby' Hall visited the school during an assembly to make the donation, which will go towards a cycle track.

■ And apologies to the Collingwood sailors of the System Engineering Management course who last month were assigned, in error, to HMS Sultan.

Partners in Clyde make the long run south

CREW and personnel connected to patrol ship HMS Clyde have packed their running shoes in preparation for the gruelling Stanley Marathon across the unforgiving Falkland Islands terrain, where steep gradients, high winds and the strange South-Atlantic climate of four seasons in one day make other marathons seem ordinary.

The ship's marine engineer officer Lt Cdr Paul Williams and gunnery officer Lt Andy Scorer are joined by VT Naval Support's George Jamieson, the senior systems manager on the ship, and Paul Blankley, who is based at Abbey Wood, to form the team 'Partners in Clyde'.

Their efforts will go to garner money for charity Seeing is Believing, which aims to restore the sight of people around the world through cataract operations, the training of eye doctors, and the building of vision centres.



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Children's Fund

Registered Charity No. 1075015

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or Laurene Smith
RN & RM Children's Fund
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Portsmouth
PO2 8RN
Telephone: 023 9263 9534
Fax: 023 9267 7574
Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com

Craig saves lives in Ghana

A NURSING officer from Derriford Hospital in Plymouth led a team out to West Africa to set up a life-saving medical centre.

Lt Craig Brown, an operating theatre specialist at the military hospital unit and specialist adviser to the RN, led a team that headed out to Sekondi and Takoradi in Ghana.

This is the fifth time that the Royal Navy and QARNNS (Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service) have headed out to the African nation to offer their services in reducing the death toll of serious untreated hernias.

Once in country, Craig was in charge of a hernia clinic operating theatre – each five-day visit period draws an average of 140 cases for treatment at the Hernia Treatment Centre in Takoradi.

Craig said: "We are educating the Ghanaians in hernia surgery and they are learning our skills and operating theatre procedures.

"This is an important process because whereas 100 per cent of hernias diagnosed will be treated by operation in the UK, only less than 14 per cent will be treated by routine operation in Africa – and of those that are not treated there is a high mortality rate.

"The Operation Hernia team working with the Ghanaian doctors and nurses are seeking to reduce this mortality rate in this region dramatically."

Operation Hernia is a charity headed by Professor Andrew Kingsnorth, a colleague of Craig's at Derriford Hospital.

Craig added: "It is a very humbling experience seeing what the Ghanaians have to tolerate; they have so little resources and are so poorly equipped and funded.

"The team makes big differences by performing procedures, whilst teaching the local nurses, that we



● Lt Craig Brown, an operating theatre specialist at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth

Picture: LA(Phot) Ray Jones

take for granted in the UK."

The Operation Hernia foundation has built up strong links with the western region of the African country.

Achievements of the mission include educating the local health care professionals to reduce the spread of HIV and hepatitis, supplying equipment to the clinics, teaching patient-lifting and

handling techniques, and basic life support to reduce preventable deaths.

Craig is particularly keen to hear from ships that may be visiting the area to find ways to strengthen the links between the Royal Navy and the Ghanaian clinic.

Find out more on the official website www.operationhernia.org.uk.

Dibdobs and shrapnel

LEFT-OVER currency and nowhere to spend it led a sailor from Devonport ship HMS Northumberland to raise money for charity, Barnardo's.

LET Herewood Crane started the collection of coins from the many ports the warship visited during her four-month deployment in the Mediterranean.

Once he'd organised collecting tins and placed encouraging posters around the ship, Herewood set about pestering the ship's company to give him all their foreign change.

He said: "I decided to make this collection because I know charities collect foreign coins and with 160 people in the ship there were bound to be a lot of coins left over from our port visits.

"Choosing Barnardo's as the charity to receive the collection wasn't easy as a lot of charities deserve the same but I hope these coins make a real difference to the children."

The collection of £91 was presented to Sue Ferris, a representative for Barnardo's during the ship's recent maintenance period in Devonport.

...and a mission to Africa

THIS fallow period in the ship's sea-going life also offered the chance for seven sailors from HMS Northumberland's company to head out to Richard's Bay in South Africa to work on a children's orphanage as *Navy News* went to press.

The aim of the one-week mission is to improve the orphanage by refurbishing the kitchens, building a playground and laying paths to keep the children from walking on mud in winter.

Members of the team also gave practical lessons, ranging from health and hygiene issues to interactive dramas.

Fundraising went well with friends, family and the ship's company all giving very generously to raise £5,000 to buy the materials needed for the projects.

Project organiser Lt Cdr Stuart Somerville said: "Having returned from a civilian-run mission last year I realised what a fantastic undertaking this would be for the team in HMS Northumberland.

"The week is going to test our resilience, teamwork and organisation skills to the limit and in return I hope the experience is positive and life-changing for the team, the children, and the staff at the orphanage."

Follow their efforts online at www.southafricaprojectmar08.blogspot.com

A record racket

TWO records have been broken on the squash court at HMS Excellent, earning a place in the record books for two members of the Military Police Guard Service.

Pte Darrel Gilmore and L/Cpl Glen Dickson laboured long and hard under the watchful eye of MAA Gavin Moulds (pictured right) and two witnesses to achieve a record-breaking squash stint of 25 hours, 26 minutes.

Darrel said: "Once we got to 24 hours we knew we had secured a place in the Guinness Book of Records for the longest ever squash game, but we were told about the Racket Sports Record, so we continued on for another hour and 26 minutes in order to break another world record."

Fundraising from the squashathon will go to support the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).



Some va va voom on va va Victory



ALTHOUGH not the most mobile of Her Majesty's ships, Victory's crew are a little different – a team from the Flagship are determined to scale the mighty peaks of the four countries of Great Britain and Ireland in less than 48 hours.

The Va Va Victory team (pictured left) raised an impressive £31,500 last year, winning the trophy for the highest sum collected, and no doubt are determined to do even better this year. (Pledge your support online at www.justgiving.com/victory4peaks)

Although they might have some rivals; in amongst the 60 other teams competing to conquer the peaks of Ben Nevis, Helvellyn, Snowdon and Carantouhill are The Flyers, captained by former Royal Marine Terry Hislop, now a military consultant to the United Arab Emirates.

All money raised will go to Wooden Spoon, the rugby charity that is celebrating its silver jubilee in 2008 with fundraising events planned throughout the year. The charity is committed to helping mentally, physically and socially disadvantaged children.

Wooden Spoon are appealing for people to take part in this year's events. If a brisk walk doesn't suit you, then perhaps the traditional John O'Groats to Lands End cycle ride might appeal...

Find out more on www.spoonchallenges.com or 01889 582889.

Give as you live

THE Royal Navy has launched a new 'give as you earn scheme' to support all Naval Service charities through the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

In encouraging people to donate through their pay, the RN hopes to get as many people as possible giving monthly through their payroll to the Sports Amenities and Benevolence Scheme (SABS).

The slogan of the new scheme is "£1 per week – a lifetime of reward", because the money collected will benefit everyone in the wider Naval community, from serving people to veterans and their dependants.

If a serviceman or woman agrees to pay £1 a week, the actual cost to them is 78 pence, because the donation is deducted from their 'before-tax' pay.

Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns, Second Sea Lord, said at the scheme's launch: "If 75 per cent of serving people in the RN donated £1 a week to the SABS, we'd collect £1.5 million every year."

The three main areas to benefit from the scheme will be sport, amenities, and benevolence – financial help to those in need.

Money raised for sport will go on extras, such as equipment and coaching, and support to clubs and associations for serving people.

The amenities fund is designed to help service people relax when off-duty, and will pay for leisure items such as new televisions, media centres and games in ships and establishments. It will also help pay for Families' Days and activities which are not publicly funded.

The Benevolence fund will help both serving and ex-serving people and their dependants who find themselves in need. It will also help casualties and their families and will be able to supplement the £10,000 charity grant which is currently paid immediately in the event of a death in service.

The scheme has already been rolled out in HMS Raleigh and BRNC Dartmouth, and representatives will be visiting other establishments to explain the benefits of the new system.

For further information contacts the SABS manager, Julie Behan, on 023 9281 6508 or the Fleet charities officer, Frank Ward, on 023 9262 5247.

'Still firing guns in sheer defiance'

TWO Naval veterans are not letting ill fate or illness daunt them as they take on fundraising challenges in the spirit of the military in which they have served.

After 17 years enjoyable service in the Royal Navy as a Marine Engineer, boiler specialist, Vaughan Williams was proud when his son Arthur signed up for the military life as an elite green beret.

However a serious car accident smashed his son's spine in several places leaving him partially paralysed, and necessitating four months in the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries at Oswestry.

Vaughan said: "Arthur is slowly getting his life back together and at the moment is still a Royal Marine."

"Both the Royal Marines and his ship HMS Albion have been of immense support to him over the last year."

"They have shown the truth of the statement that the Royal Marines are more than a career but a family that always do their best to look after their own."

Vaughan admits that the debt to Oswestry can never be repaid but he is determined to try – the veteran intends to walk from John O'Groats to Lands End to raise money for the spinal unit at Oswestry and Spirit, a charity that supports research into spinal injuries and their treatment.

Find out more online at www.vaughanscharitywalk.co.uk or pledge through www.justgiving.com/vaughanwilliams.

Spinal injury is all too familiar to another Naval veteran, Barry O'Connell, who after injuring his back falling from a ladder ended up at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital at Stanmore.



● Vaughan Williams as a 'baby Tiff' in 1965

Last year Barry went through a full major thoracic spine operation, one of the first carried out in this country, where he died twice yet, to use Barry's memorable phrase, "they got the old boilers fired up after quite a struggle."

He went on: "The plain fact was I was told the only reason they carried out my operation was that I was mega fit and it paid off, as my spine specialist said when he knew of my Naval background."

"He told me that he had seen the film of the Graf Spee battle and that I was just like HMS Exeter, 'you vanish in a load of smoke and the officers on the other ships were amazed to see Exeter come out badly damaged, on fire, smoke pouring out of her, but still firing her guns in sheer defiance.'"

"The specialist then asked me how I got away with it. I just smiled and said 'Lady Luck.'"

Now clad in an exo-skeleton of

body armour, and fitted out with an impressive wheelchair that he has named the 'GR7 Harrier', the determined veteran has decided to raise money for the groups that have aided him in his injuries.

As *Navy News* went to press, Barry was due to take part in the Sport Relief mile, completing the distance in his GR7 Harrier while flying the White Ensign proudly at Colchester Garrison.

He said: "Being a Pongo area, I aim to represent the Senior Service by example leading from the front."

He is grateful for the support of his local RNA in Clacton, plus the RN and Fleet Air Arm who have provided him with clothing and stickers to keep the RN at the forefront of attention.

He added: "But one sticker says 'Hello sailor', which raises a few eyebrows – mind you, no ex-matlot has made an offer to me yet..."

As well as his fundraising efforts for the national Sport Relief charity, Barry has his eye set on bigger things: "If the Royals want me to assist them do various things like abseiling over bridges or down buildings, then count me in!"

"I am up for it in my wheelchair, I yearn for it and give me a chance to do something others say is impossible in the chair I will do."



● CPO David 'Tug' Wilson is cheered on by HMS Bulwark's commanding officer Capt Jeremy Blunden and shipmates

Tug rows, cycles and runs for lifeboat service

CPO David 'Tug' Wilson on board assault ship HMS Bulwark set himself a daunting challenge when he decided to complete a half-marathon in three separate disciplines – indoor rowing, cycling and running – in one marathon session.

Tug took on the commitment as part of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's 'Showing our support' national fundraising day.

Tug said: "As someone who works at sea, and also sails recreationally, the RNLI is an important charity to me."

"My brother is an ex-lifeboat crew member and now works full time for the RNLI so it is a charity that I have always supported."

"I am delighted to have been able to raise so much money for this very worthwhile cause and would like to thank everyone on board for their support throughout."

In total Tug has managed to raise over £1,048 – enough money to provide all the required safety and survival equipment for one lifeboat crew member.

Tug completed the challenge in four hours and 21 minutes, nine minutes inside his target time.



● Trainee Engineering Technician Brooke Wilson and her fellow trainees rub down the paintwork ready for repainting at Pengover Residential Home

Sailors head up the garden path

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh have visited a local residential home to create an inspirational and relaxing garden for residents.

The sailors began work at the home in January and Raleigh plans to send trainees to the home on a weekly basis over the next nine months.

The 'Up the garden path' project will see the sailors building a path, a dry stone wall and laying the foundations for a shed.

Hawke Division instructor PO Les Rust said:

"The trainees will probably have a maximum of two weeks with us before they start the next stage of their training, and during that time we look to put together a programme of activities to enhance the skills they have learned during basic training."

"Working at Pengover is an excellent way for them to put their team-working skills into practice while also interacting with the older people in the local community and helping to brighten their day."

Over 750 trainees will work on the project.



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75 YEARS OF SERVICE 1932 - 2007



● Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt receives his Junglie L-plates from 848 NAS instructor Capt Dave West RM

Picture: PO Sue Emery

Veteran cab drivers

ALTHOUGH a pilot by trade, Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt had to pick up his L-plates when he went for an aviation refresher package at RNAS Yeovilton.

The admiral, who will soon be taking charge of the Joint Helicopter Command, spent some

Defence college in top ten

WELBECK, the Defence Sixth-form College, achieved a top ten rating from the A-level Performance System.

The independent body looked at the summer 2007 A-level results of students in 975 colleges and schools nationwide, and the defence college came tenth.

The college, which aims to educate students to become officers in the Armed Services or civil service, is the only college in the country where mathematics and physics are compulsory, and has only been at its new, purpose-build site in Leicestershire for two years.

time with the Sea King experts at 848 Naval Air Squadron – one of the four Commando Helicopter Force squadrons that will come under his control in the joint force.

The admiral flew the Sea King in general handling, and the more specialist Junglie aspects of low-level tactical navigation, confined areas, load-lifting and night vision goggle operations.

Rear Admiral Johnstone-Burt was heard to remark that it made a refreshing change from working in an office.

However one pilot at 848 NAS needs no refresher course – commanding officer Cdr Terry Tyack has notched up the impressive total of 4,000 hours of flying.

Since joining up in 1984, the officer has flown a range of aircraft types, including five different operational helicopters.

Upon landing after his 4,000th hour in the air the traditional celebration took place – a bottle of champagne and a ‘cooling-down’ from the squadron.

Celebrities hang out with the Navy

THE ROYAL Navy has been a bit of a media star in recent weeks. Ant and Dec paid a surprise visit to HMS Collingwood and children's TV presenter Andy Akinwolere tried his hand on the sinking ship simulator at HMS Raleigh.

Andy Akinwolere, from the BBC's *Blue Peter*, had the daunting task of facing the Royal Navy's multi-million pound simulator.

Andy joined recruits at HMS Raleigh for routine training on the simulator, known as Havoc. The training is part of the recruits' nine-week initial training course that helps prepare them for how to deal with floods and damage to the ship's hull.

During the training the simulator rocks from side to side and fills with water.

Before he stepped into the simulator Andy confessed to a fear of water, but the Navy won him over: "I get really nervous when I'm out of my depth. But I ended up having an exhilarating day."

"I learnt the importance of teamwork, and my team was exceptional," he said.

During the tough onslaught within Havoc, the trainees must work together to stem the flow of water through the breaches in the hull using wooden wedges and hammers.

They then have to shore up the bulkheads with timber to re-establish the watertight integrity of the ship.

CPO David Battersby, Havoc Senior Instructor, said: "The trainees and staff really enjoyed having Andy with us for the day; he did remarkably well in such a short period of time."

"During the exercise the simulator fills with around 70 tonnes of water and can tilt up to 20 degrees from vertical. Flooding on a ship at sea is one of the most dangerous situations to be in and this training is vital."

Ant and Dec have also been hanging out with the Navy

in practice for the *Ant vs Dec* challenge, in which they compete against each other in teams in the latest series of ITV's *Saturday Night Takeaway*.

They spent time in HMS Collingwood undergoing obstacle course training prior to tackling the real thing live on their show on the Saturday.

The celebrities – including Bonnie Langford, Debbie McGee, Melinda Messenger – tackled crossing over murky waters, climbing over a vertical wall, crawling through a dark tunnel and scrambling under and above a huge net.

Lt Steve Kelly, PTRO and organiser of the challenge said, "The whole experience was quite surreal."

"When the celebrities arrived at Collingwood on Tuesday, it was difficult to know how they would react to the challenge and the physical aspects involved."

"Fortunately we had great weather, which helped, and to their credit the teams cracked on and got stuck in, whether they were on the assault course or handling training on the field guns."

"Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and we gained an insight into what we were up against."

Saturday was a long day for everyone as it was spent rehearsing and making sure ITV were happy with the camera angles.

All their hard work paid off in the end as the whole event went smoothly and to plan.

Before they had to go out and compete against each other Ant and Dec watched clips from their training along with all the viewers of *Saturday Night Takeaway*.



● Dec (or is it Ant?) on the obstacle course at HMS Collingwood with actress Bonnie Langford

Picture: ITV

The live competition in the studio car park ran perfectly with Dec's team winning the event and that vital point.

Two weeks later the lads and their celebrity teams were back

with the Royal Navy when they headed to Austria to join forces with the successful RN and RM Bobsleigh team for a white-knuckle ride with the winter-sports heroes (see page 51).

No1 in pen and clubz

HMS Monmouth's clubswinger LPT 'Pat' Patterson has been awarded the Tony Thyrtitt-Bettridge Memorial trophy as the best PTI across all ranks.

And Logs Lucy Gilston of HMS Ocean – a Writer in old speak – won the Writer of the Year award 2006-07 for the best overall performance at Raleigh.

Logistician (Personnel (Admin)) of the Year doesn't have quite the same ring, does it? – Ed

Family ties

THE Navy is still a family affair with members meeting up around the globe.

Brothers AB(Sea) Lee and ET(ME) Steven Gilboy met while their ships (respectively Westminster and Edinburgh) were preparing for their transits south through the Suez Canal.

The brothers from St Athan in south Wales were thrilled to have the chance to spend some time together before setting off again with their deployments.

Lee said: "I knew we were both going to be deployed on Orion 08, but I never thought we'd get the chance to meet up. It was great showing my little brother around my new ship."

Meanwhile CPO Annette Laurie ended up training her son, AB Sam Furniss, at HMS Collingwood.

Annette was at the Fareham base for a short period, while her son Sam underwent operational training before joining colleagues in Iraq.

And down in HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, one trainee sailor had a surprise guest when he saw a very familiar face in the crowd.

Trainee AET Glenn Harris told his twin, Alex, that he would be unable to make it to his passing out parade, as he would be on duty at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

However, unbeknown to Alex, Glenn had obtained special permission from his instructors to travel back to HMS Raleigh to see his brother complete his training.

Glenn said: "It was fantastic to come back to Raleigh to surprise Alex. The look on his face when he saw me said everything."



● Steven and Lee Gilboy on HMS Westminster's forecastle



● Glenn and Alex Harris at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield



The Band of HM Royal Marines School of Music
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Sure-footed at the AIB

NESTLING in a corner of HMS Sultan’s site sits the Admiralty Interview Board – whenever in the past we’ve done features on the AIB, we’ve tended to focus on the aspiring candidates, wobbling their way over water-filled tanks.

But if you are in the Naval service right now, then there’s a one in five chance you’ve been through it yourself.

However you may not know what it’s like to sit on the other side of that daunting desk. And that desk places heavy demands on both perspectives.

Cdr John Warden, board president, said: “It’s a huge responsibility here; the people that we recruit are the officers of the future.”

Board member Lt Mark Hamilton said: “I enjoy it because I have an influence over the future officers of the Navy.

“I think it’s exciting when you see a real star come through. You think to yourself ‘Hmm, is that a future Nelson?’

“This is not someone who is going to be a captain of industry, but a captain of one of our ships. That is so exciting.”

Gruelling as the three days undoubtedly are for the candidates to become officers in the RN, RFA or RM, it is also hard work for the officers sitting in judgement who must be able to back up their conclusions with fact.

Cdr John Warden admits: “It’s like doing a six-hour exam. We have to concentrate hard at every moment.”

For candidates undertaking the AIB, little has changed on the surface – although the imminent arrival of a new computer-based psychometric test might surprise the old and bold officers out there.

The fundamental structure of the AIB is much the same: candidates arrive at HMS Sultan on the first evening, and board and bond together in the AIB’s own specially-designed building.

The next day pulls them through a morning of psychometric tests, service knowledge questions and essay, before plunging them into the gym for the fitness trials of the bleep test and preparations for the next day’s physical challenges of the practical leadership task (think wobbly bridges and water-filled tanks...).

The final day begins with the short, sharp, but hopefully dry, shock of the bridge-building and chasm-swinging leadership tests, before the scenario exercise puts them through their paces in quick thought and seeks out alert minds.

Individual interviews then allow each candidate to put forward their own examples of leadership,



● Board members Lt Mark Hamilton, Cdr John Warden and Lt Cdr Victoria Dale-Smith assess candidates at the AIB

Picture: LA(Phot) Judy Hurst

teamwork and motivation from the world outside of the AIB.

The officers’ priority is to make sure that each candidate has equal chance to prove him or herself, that they treat each fairly and without favour.

Objectivity is key. The ‘cut of his jib’ is no longer a factor in officer selection.

The AIB brought in a rigorous competency-based system three years ago, and its success is now being proven in the hallways of Britannia Royal Naval College.

A recent validation process looked into Phase One training at Dartmouth and found a strong link between the AIB’s scoring and BRNC performance.

This examination will take place again as successful AIB candidates go on to complete Phase Two training and move into their first jobs as Young Officers.

The competency-based approach is judged against a solid framework which analyses candidates’ abilities in the areas of: effective intelligence; leadership potential; communication; courage and values; and motivation.

And in each of these areas, the candidates’ have at least two chances to prove themselves to weed out the disastrous effects of one-off poor performance.

Each score is debated hotly among the three Naval

officers who sit in judgement. Rank, while respected, is not ruler here. Lieutenant can disagree with commander, provided there is solid evidence for the debate.

Each score, each point, has to be justified from this evidence of candidate’s performance, not from perception.

All AIB officers undergo two days of intensive training by experts from Qinetiq to follow the strictures of evidence-based assessment.

Board president Cdr Mike Blowers admits: “When I came here I had to put aside my scepticism about competency-based assessment, but I was won over – as we all were.

“We all believe in the process. It is fair and it is consistent.”

Lt Cdr Victoria Dale-Smith said: “At the start of the course I thought there was no way I could keep objective. But actually you do. Because you have to treat each candidate as an individual.

“For me it is now second nature, although I thought it would go against my own nature. But actually it is very easy to achieve – in here, you switch off all your opinions to assess that candidate.



● Cdr Phil Waterhouse greets Cdr Mike Clarke (left) with other former COs of the Defence Maritime Logistics School

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Silver celebration at Logistics School

THERE was a certain silvering of the hair amongst the officers gathered at HMS Raleigh to celebrate 25 years of the Defence Maritime Logistics School.

Current commandant Cdr Phil Waterhouse – whose grey hairs aren’t too obvious just yet – welcomed ten former commanding officers back to the establishment to see how the school has changed over the past decades.

When the school moved from its Chatham home to Raleigh in 1983 it was still known as the Royal Navy Supply and Secretariat School, training for Writers, Stores Accountants and Stewards.

Chef training moved from Aldershot to Raleigh just over a decade later to join with its natural allies in the supply branch.

Of course, these titles have recently been rebranded to Logisticians Personnel Administration, Supply Chain and Catering Services, for the sake of accuracy if not brevity.

Cdr Waterhouse said: “We now provide training in a modern and realistic environment to give our students the knowledge they need to meet

the challenge of today’s operations.

“Ultimately we want them to reap the reward of a successful career in both the logistics branch and the Royal Navy.

“What hasn’t changed over the past 25 years is the ethos of the school, its commitment to certain values and the standard we require.

“Regardless of their specialisation, we also seek to remind our students of their ultimate role – that is sailor first, ready to fight and win.”

Among the former COs who had a chance to look over the developments at the school was Cdr Mike Clarke, the first CO at the Raleigh site.

He said: “Logistics training is in excellent hands and very much in tune with modern tri-Service thinking.

“The staff at every rank are thoroughly professional. They were also remarkably enthusiastic, self-possessed and personable.

“It was of tremendous interest to see how the school had evolved over the last quarter of a century.”

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● *Endurance passes one of two huge icebergs she encountered on transit from Signy Island where she had picked up scientists who were closing down their base for the winter*
Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams, HMS Endurance

A long way from home

TEN thousand miles, to be precise – as Britain’s second most senior admiral discovered.

Numerous Commanders-in-Chief Fleet have attempted to visit HMS Endurance ‘in the field’ – but have been thwarted by distance and programmes. Luckily, the latter fell into place for Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope – but the distance remained immense.

CinC Fleet makes a point of getting around as much of the RN and RM as possible to hear the views of men and women on the ground, assure them their deeds are valued, and to gain a better understanding of the Senior Service’s manifold and varied global commitments.

None of those commitments adequately compares with the unique mission of the Red Plum. And so the admiral flew to 67°S to the British Antarctic Survey base of Rothera to join the ice survey ship in the shadow of a glacier. “It’s hard to understand exactly what Endurance does unless you see her in her area of operations – her

remit is so large and complex,” explained Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner, the ship’s doctor.

Admiral Stanhope had just 48 hours to understand that complex remit. He began with a visit to Blaiklock Island, where BAS scientists are studying the long-term effects of climate change by analysing moss samples and the invertebrates which live in it. The admiral was also shown some minute larvae which had been found for the first time – and which may prove to be an entirely new species.

Blaiklock is home not merely to the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth, but also to penguins, like much of the fringe of Antarctica. In Blaiklock’s case, it’s a colony of adelic penguins and at this time of year, the birds are moulting ready to spend the months of the austral winter in the sea.

And Blaiklock is home too to an old research hut, abandoned now save for fuel and supplies should any explorers or scientists become stranded on the island. It also houses a visitors’ book with comments going back half a century. There is now a fresh entry:

21st Feb 2008. Commander-in Chief Fleet-UK Navy. A once-in-a-lifetime visit for someone in my position to ensure HMS Endurance continues to contribute to Science and Diplomacy in the Antarctic.

The trip to Blaiklock done, the admiral was flown over icebergs and the odd minke whale back to Rothera, where he was met by Lt Stuart Long and his team who had been conducting surveys of the waters around the base.

Then it was into the BAS base for a tour of the facilities – and especially the aquarium.

Thanks to the extreme cold and high oxygen levels in Antarctic waters, marine life here grows to giant proportions: a water louse can be as big as your hand, and water spiders and starfish are invariably huge.

After an evening back aboard Endurance chatting with the ship’s company, Admiral Stanhope departed for his headquarters in Portsmouth.

And when he got there, he sent a signal to the Red Plum to thank the sailors and marines for their efforts:

I was truly impressed by the professional manner each and every task I witnessed was conducted from flying, through survey to scientific support and equally by your people conducting them.

The focus and enthusiasm for your business was very obvious in all to whom I spoke and the upbeat nature of your team was consequently of no surprise. It was great fun.

I know of no other CinC Fleet in the recent past to visit you in the Antarctic, although many have tried. I was most fortunate and privileged that it all came together.

The admiral is not the only one to leave the ice. The Red Plum has completed her spell in Antarctica for this season now.

She will, however, remain in the Southern Hemisphere throughout the austral winter, including paying a visit to South Africa, before resuming survey work around the frozen continent towards the end of the year.



● *Just chillin’... A couple of seals loll about on a small iceberg alongside a small colony of Emperor penguins*
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow, HMS Endurance

'Farewell, we'll meet again'



THE arrows and their crossbow are still discernible, the name HUNTER still legible, the final resting place of a British destroyer – lost off Narvik nearly 70 years ago – has been discovered by the Norwegian Navy.

Lying 300 metres (985ft) beneath the surface of Ofotfjord, half a dozen miles west of the Arctic port, Hunter entombs more than 100 men, killed when the ship clashed with German destroyers in these narrow waters on April 10 1940.

Hunter had charged into Narvik with four sisters, determined to oust the Germans who had occupied the town the day before.

They caught the enemy by surprise and raised hell for the first hour or so, but as the Kriegsmarine responded, so Hunter was crippled by the German destroyer George Thiele which pummeled the British warship at close range.

From 30kts, Hunter crashed to an immediate halt in the middle of the fjord at the mercy of the German guns.

She was probably already doomed, but ill-fortune now conspired with German gunnery. In the chaos of battle, HMS Hotspur suddenly found Hunter dead ahead.

Unable to avoid her sister, she sliced into Hunter with a sickening crunch which echoed around the fjord.

The mortally-wounded Hunter now began to sink rapidly. Her siren howled one last time as the boilers died and around 6.45am on that fateful Wednesday, the destroyer sank. Of her crew of 145, 108 were killed.

And there she has lain undisturbed and unlocated for more than six decades until HNOMS Tyr was surveying the fjord, looking for mines as part of major winter war games, Armatura Borealis (see the centre pages).

After 14 fruitless hours of searching, her echo sounder picked up the hull of a sunken vessel on the bed of Ofotfjord and she sent down her robot mini submarine to investigate.

The crystal-clear pictures the craft sent back confirmed the wreck was the Hunter.

Hunter was one of two British destroyers lost in the first Battle of Narvik.

HMS Hardy was also wrecked; her Commanding Officer Capt Bernard Warburton-Lee received the Victoria Cross posthumously for his leadership that day.

Sixty-eight years later, Warburton-Lee's last battle cry was hoisted aboard amphibious assault ship HMS Albion – *Continue engaging the enemy* – as a procession of Allied warships,

four British – HM Ships Albion, Bulwark, Cornwall and RFA Mounts Bay – and one Norwegian Coastguard vessel – NOCGV Andenes – formed a line and sailed past the wreck site, each ship paying her respects by casting wreaths into the icy waters and pouring a tot of rum over the side.

As the force left Ofotfjord behind, the Aldis lamps flashed into life as a final tribute: F A R E W E L L W E ' L L M E E T A G A I N.

"Finding HMS Hunter was a poignant moment and being able to pay our respects along with our Norwegian and Dutch allies is particularly fitting to those who lost their lives," said Major General Garry Robison RM, Commander of the UK's Amphibious Force.

"It was a very moving ceremony. Sadly, we were not able to bring over the three veterans that served on HMS Hunter. But we shall certainly take the opportunity to let them have the films and the photographs of that ceremony."

Former seaman Fred Ward (pictured, right, in his RN days), now aged 88, is one of those survivors.

"I have mixed emotions about the events of over 68 years ago and the loss of so many fine friends," he said.

"I now have a great sense of relief knowing the final resting place of my comrades and our ship. My only sadness is that I wasn't able to attend the ceremony to pay my own personal tribute."

Fellow former shipmate Able Seaman James Renshaw, today 89, added: "I lost 100 friends and 'family members' when she went down."

"Not a day has passed that I have not thought about her and the people we left behind."

Covered in oil, Hunter's survivors trod water in the bitterly-cold fjord until they were picked up by the Germans.

They were eventually repatriated – but only after signing an agreement not to take up arms against the Third Reich again.

The Norwegians had spent several years trying to find Hunter's wreck; now they have discovered it, it will be officially marked as a war grave.

Hunter was not the only loss of the ill-fated Norwegian campaign honoured by today's sailors during

● **Sailors and Marines line up on HMS Albion as they prepare to lay wreaths to the men of HMS Hunter**

Picture: Surg Lt Cdr Anthony Dew, HMS Albion

● **(Right) Hunter's ship's badge, still clearly identifiable after nearly seven decades below the water and (below right) a cluster of .5 calibre machine-guns point forlornly skywards on Hunter's wreck**

Video stills: Royal Norwegian Navy



Armatura Borealis.

Bound for northern Norway to take part in the exercise, HM Ships Bulwark and Cornwall and RFA Mounts Bay sailed over the wrecks of aircraft carrier Glorious and her escorting destroyers Ardent and Acasta.

The trio were returned to the UK as British forces pulled out of Norway when they were pounced on by battle-cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau about 180 miles west of Harstad.

All three were sunk in a two-hour battle, although Acasta severely damaged Scharnhorst with a torpedo hit and both German ships were damaged by shellfire.

Of Ardent's and Acasta's ship's companies, only one man survived from each destroyer; barely 40 men were picked up from HMS Glorious.

On a freezing February day in 2008, Bulwark's ship's company mustered on the flight deck as the assault ship's senior rating, Executive Warrant Officer Russ Williams, dropped a wreath into the ocean and the ship's chaplain Tim Wilkinson led a service of remembrance.

■ **Heroes of the Royal Navy, page 12**



And farewell to Ginger too

CLEARANCE divers honoured the last wish of one of the doyens of their branch when they cast the ashes of Arthur 'Ginger' Bryant over the spot where his comrades lay.

The White Ensign on HMS Chiddingfold was lowered to half mast, Flag Alpha – 'I am conducting diving operations' – hoisted and the minehunter's crew lined the upper decks over the wreck of battleship HMS Barham.

Here, 66 years before Ginger had been one of 450 men rescued when the battleship was torpedoed by U331 in the eastern Mediterranean; 861 comrades were not so fortunate.

Chiddingfold's dive team embarked in the ship's RIB as the Still sounded over the water and Dvr Moger scattered Ginger's ashes before Lt Paul Hursthouse laid a wreath on the spot – all in accordance with Ginger's will.

When Barham sank, Ginger was a 20-year-old leading seaman who had been bombed, torpedoed and shipwrecked once before.

He would subsequently serve in the Atlantic and Arctic on convoy duties. It was only post war that he became a diver, subsequently being called upon to dive on the wreck of the submarine Affray.

In the mid-50s Ginger was in charge of the diving training centre on Horsea Island – a job which was interrupted by the Suez crisis; he headed to Egypt to salvage wrecks at Port Said.

He retired from the Senior Service as a chief petty officer in 1966 and ran a pub in Essex for the next 15 years, where his diver's helmet and boots enjoyed pride of place. He also swam regularly – he took his final dip at the age of 86 last summer.

Remembering today's dead

DOCUMENTARY makers are hoping family and friends of those lost in Iraq and Afghanistan will help them complete a three-hour film.

The BBC has commissioned the programme to honour the lives of the fallen through words, photographs, video footage and interviews with comrades, friends and relatives.

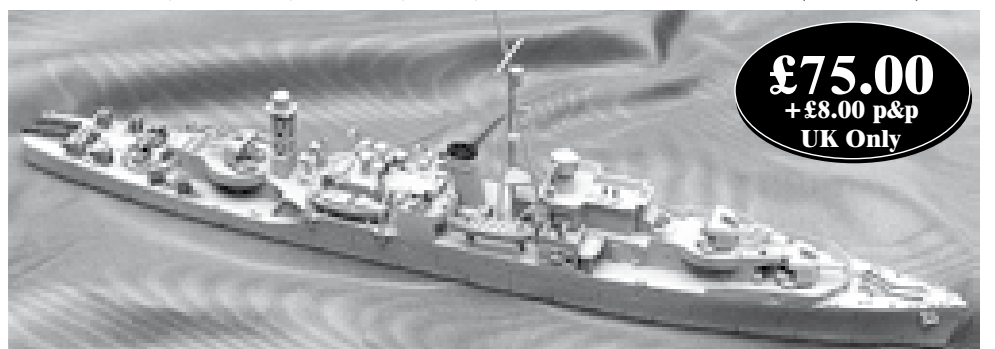
The programme makers intend to feature every serviceman and woman who has died in either conflict.

If family members, friends or former colleagues feel they can contribute in some way – there is no obligation to be involved in the actual film and conversations would be in confidence – they can contact Rachel Noar or David Brindley at Minnow Films on 0207 741 0105 or by email: david@minnowfilms.co.uk or rachel@minnowfilms.co.uk.

Serving personnel should seek permission from their COs if they wish to contribute.

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Chart and shoal of RN

IN MANY ways, it was something of a minor miracle that so many men o'war managed to negotiate Spithead or the Hamoaze in the days of sail.

For the surveyors who charted the safe passages through shoals and around headlands were not formally trained; they were taught their vital skills at sea by their elders (though not necessarily better).

If you were lucky enough to have been tutored by James Cook or one of his talented proteges then there was a fair chance that the charts you produced would endure.

After all, some of Cook's charts of the South Pacific were still in use in the mid-20th century.

But the duffers at the other end of the scale might have better been left to plumb lines in the deep oceans, where they could not have caused much damage, rather than passing on their poor grasp of a complex subject.

The knowledge gained on an *ad hoc* basis by these budding hydrographers was limited compared to that possible in today's Hydrographic, Meteorological and Oceanographic Training Group (HMTG), and the technology available to modern surveyors would astonish Cook and his colleagues – indeed, the capability of a ship like HMS Scott in terms of data-gathering is astonishing whatever your perspective.

The deep ocean survey ship can cover 150 square kilometres an hour, following precise satellite-plotted survey lines hundreds of miles long before wheeling round to double back on a parallel path.

The value of the work done by Scott and her various sister ships to the Royal Navy, as well as the merchant fleets of the world, has always been immense, and that remains the case in 2008.

It was as a result of advances in technology during World War 2 that formal classroom training came into favour, allowing students to learn the theory before testing themselves on the water.

Hydrography is the measurement, study and analysis of bodies of water and the margins of land, particularly with regard to safe navigation.

Generally it includes the gathering of data about water depth, tides, currents, the nature of the sea bed and the measurement of prominent and relevant features ashore, either for navigational or military purposes.

Or, as Lt Cdr Pat Mowatt, Hydrographic Training Officer, put it: "This is a vital warfare specialisation. It is about gathering environmental data to optimise sensors and weapons."

He continued: "This is a very very useful skill, not just in a warfare sense, but generally."

"They are skills useful in military and wider aspects. And because we all speak the same language we can understand each other – these people are very employable outside."

"It is very attractive for a young person coming in from outside the branch – here is an opportunity to gain an excellent skill and external qualifications and spend some time in the RN and put it all into practice."

"Then, looking ahead, they can say: 'I am being provided with something which I could use further on in my life' – and many people do."

"A high proportion of surveyors and HMs leave and go to work for civilian organisations in similar fields."

"And look at the ships we have. Crews are rotated, they spend a lot of time away, it's very hi-tech, very comfortable, there are fantastic programmes, and you are right at the tip of exercises and operations."

Lt Cdr Mowatt added that he was not advocating training up then swiftly jumping ship.

"I cannot for the life of me understand why people want to leave – this branch offers everything that someone could want from the Navy," he said.

"Great visits, great ships, great skills. I think it's a fantastic way to go."

"Our ships haven't got the missile systems – they do not look like frigates or destroyers – but they are warships."

"These are military people doing military jobs – a vital part of the warfare environment."

Recognition of that fact came when the old Surveying Squadron colour scheme of white hulls and buff funnels was replaced by Pusser's grey, bringing them visibly into line with the rest of the Fleet.

The role of hydrography has been strengthened by the RN overhaul of amphibious capability over the past decade or so, allowing surveyors to prove their worth over and over again in recent times.

For example, in 2003 veteran coastal survey ship HMS Roebuck was approaching the end of a three-month deployment to the southern Gulf, and facing the axe on her return to the UK.

But as war loomed in the region, she was diverted to the northern Gulf and her deployment extended.

In less than six weeks the little ship surveyed the main amphibious landing zone – an area larger than Hampshire – and plotted everything on the sea bed larger than a coffee table.

Her crew continued to gather data until the day before the invasion, and with the ship able to produce her own paperwork, new sets of charts were printed on board and distributed to Allied warships as soon as the data had been analysed.

Hydrographers discovered deeper water inshore than older charts indicated, which meant that aircraft carriers and assault

ships could move closer in, reducing helicopter flight times by ten minutes and speeding up the airborne assault.

Roebuck later went on to clear the route to Umm Qasr for humanitarian aid, and surveyed the port itself – the first such work carried out in 40 years.

Even in the 21st century some RN survey work is pioneering in nature – no survey data has been gathered for sections of the African coast, for example, and part of the task of HMS Antarctica is to probe the waters around Antarctica for hidden dangers, providing safe routes for the burgeoning deep-south cruise market.

The key to military success is preparation, and Lt Cdr David Wyatt, who is head of the Hydrographic Unit at the HMTG, cites the Australian experience in East Timor as a classic example of the important role his students will one day play in their navy.

"Going into East Timor was described as 'the biggest Australian amphibious operation since D-Day' by one of their admirals," said Lt Cdr Wyatt.

"They did all the planning, then checked the preferred beach and discovered that they could not use it."

"In just one night they found an alternative beach, surveyed it and allowed the amphibious force to go in without incident."

Apart from Endurance in the Southern Ocean, almost all the efforts of the rest of the survey ships are directly in support of military tasks, so newly-trained sailors and officers are genuinely one step from vital front-line duty when they emerge from the doors of the HMTG.

But it is not all about humming number-crunching computers in calm 'mission spaces' – lean-manned ships such as Echo and Enterprise still require some more traditional sailor skills such as watchkeeping, machine gunner and boat crew.



● (Above) Surveyor recorders set up a tide pole just off a shallow beach in Antarctica; HMS Endurance's motor boat James Caird can be seen in the background
Picture: PO(Phot) Chris Brick

● (Left) Pictured on Nimrod, one of Endurance's motor boats, LS(SR) Kerry Collins (left), LET 'Robbie' Robinson and AB(HM) Lee Churchill took data on tidal flows over a two-day period at the tricky entrance to Deception Island at the beginning of this year
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow

● (Below) CPO Dave Sharp carries out survey work at the British Antarctic Research Base Rothera earlier this year, with HMS Endurance far left of the picture
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow



**Next month
– Looking to
the skies**

Cold fleet

HMS CORNWALL is used to playing a supporting role.

She is a frigate, after all – and although as a Type 22 she is more than capable of acting as flagship (most recently for the Allied CTF 158 task force in the Gulf) she continues the RN tradition of frigates as workhorses of the Fleet.

But that is not the case with HMS Ark Royal.

She is a *bona fide* Death Star, the soubriquet given by smaller ships to the carriers, which suck in all the attention and leave others in their shadow.

But

this time the Ark is also playing a supporting role, as a helicopter carrier to the assault ship twins Albion and Bulwark which led Exercise Armatura Borealis along the coast of Norway.

While Bulwark was flagship for Commander Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Peter Hudson, Albion acted as command ship for the maritime component commander of the exercise, Maj Gen Gary Robison RM, Commander UK Amphibious Force.

So, a back seat for the Ark then?

Far from it. You name it, they got it – air attacks, fast boat attacks, submarine attacks; just about the only thing not thrown at the task group was a cavalry charge.

On top of that the carrier was supporting 824 Naval Air Squadron's operational training, so squadron engineers, aviators and the carrier's flight deck crew had to endure bitter cold and long dark hours while ensuring the aircraft were

up to the task – and the Merlins, once airborne, played their part in tracking 'enemy' submarines and fast attack craft, as well as ferrying people.

One of those underwater threats was a British T-boat (main picture) which probed the task force's defences as the assault ships prepared to deliver their cargo of Royal Marines ashore.

So, back to Cornwall, given the job of supporting the landings, providing gunfire support and protecting the capital ships.

She was also a well-armed forward operating base for 3 Commando Brigade as she had her own force of 80 green berets – most accommodated on camp beds in the hangar.

It was quite a change from last year's eventful deployment to the Gulf, as noted by her CO, Cdr Jeremy Woods.

"The difference in conditions between our operations last year and on Exercise Armatura Borealis now could not be greater, but this really illustrates the flexibility of a capable ship such as HMS Cornwall, and the relevance of naval power in the modern world."

"We are just as at home up here, working close inshore, putting troops on the beach in the dead of night while fighting off an air raid, as we were protecting the oil platforms in the Gulf."

With the end of the exercise the 25 vessels of various nations went their separate ways.

For Ark that means a brief stopover in Scotland before she deploys to America to work with the US Marine Corps.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Jonathan Hamlet



● The Northern Lights illuminate Ark Royal



● HMS Cornwall in Norwegian waters

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Ice cold



DARKNESS rules. Distant lights of scattered houses struggle to punctuate the night sky that is rent by the milky-green slash of the Aurora Borealis.

A hand pressed to the window in Flyco can feel the warm air that slews down the glass to ward off a fractal screen of ice.

HMS Bulwark is in Norway, along with her sister ships Albion, Ark Royal, Mounts Bay, and Cornwall, being put through her paces amid the fjords and mountainous isles of the Scandinavian country's Arctic north in Exercise Armatura Borealis.

Bulwark has emerged from the cocoon of refit to become the high readiness amphibious flagship and Norway is where she is testing her wings.

And it's not just the ship which is being brought back to speed. Almost three-quarters of the assault ship's company have joined the warship in her fallow period in the hands of DML at Devonport Naval Base – including her commanding officer Capt Jeremy Blunden.

"This is the first time I've been involved in amphibious warfare as commanding officer," he said.

"I've never done this sort of stuff before, so I'm learning as well – as much as the AB who joined the ship last week.

"We are new to the game, we are learning how to do this. This exercise is the final proving ground for HMS Bulwark as amphibious flagship. Out here we are proving to ourselves that we can maintain and sustain the ship in a higher state of readiness.

"We have had to hone our warfighting skills."

Heading up the ships involved in the wargames off the coast of Norway, Cdre Peter Hudson, Commander Amphibious Task Group, is no stranger to the Navy's newest assault ships.

He said: "Since I commanded HMS Albion there has been a staggering leap in capability in both Albion and Bulwark.

"This challenging environ-

ment allows us to really stretch these ships. And more lessons will continue to be learnt and these ships will continue to evolve."

Armatura Borealis has brought together four of the Royal Navy's weighty amphibious ships – HMS Bulwark, HMS Albion, RFA Mounts Bay and HMS Ark Royal (in her converted helicopter assault ship role), into the somewhat cramped confines of Norway's Arctic coastline.

The British amphibious ships are bolstered by various other nations, including a Dutch task group featuring HNLMS Rotterdam – the inspiration for the RFA's Bay class – and two Belgian minehunters.

In addition, a British and a Norwegian submarine patrol the clear waters and Type 22 HMS Cornwall bolsters the power of the Task Force.

Away from the ships, the shores of Norway throng with clusters of Royal Marines from many units, but predominantly 45 Commando – all enjoying the bracing pleasures of Arctic training in the Scandinavian ice and snow; and nestled amid the mountains beyond, the men and women of the Commando Helicopter Force are flourishing amid the rigours of their Clockwork deployment to Bardufoss' climactic challenges.

These weeks of exercises have brought almost 4,000 RN, RM and RFA personnel up to Harstad and its surrounding regions.

This is the first taste of the Arctic for many people on board Bulwark, and although the ship had played host to the battle staff 18 months earlier, it was in the very different conditions of the Gulf.

In fact, the warm seas of the Mediterranean and east of Suez are the expected environments of much of the Navy's fleet in current global operations, not the Arctic which recalls the legacy of the long-ended Cold War.

"It compels us to think harder, think deeper, think laterally," said Cdre Hudson.

He added: "We have an impressive amphibious task group, with elements of the

Although the Cold War ago, war in the cold is : the Royal Navy and Mar skills. Exercise Armatura the Navy's amphibious f Arctic Circle. Helen Crav ship HMS Bulwark as pace.

Royal Navy held at high readiness, at the forefront of contingent capability.

"If we are to keep that capability recharged and fresh, we need to do challenging exercises like this."

It's a point echoed by Bulwark's CO: "We are proving our ability to operate in cold climates.

"We are a worldwide Navy, capable of operating in all conditions, whether arctic, temperate or jungle. We are proving we have the full range of capabilities in those conditions.

"We are revisiting lessons from previous deployments, maintaining the level of experience across the Royal Navy – should we be called to a crisis to somewhere like this, we have a body of expertise that could mount any operation.

"These exercises are few and far between, we need to make use of training opportunities when they come up."

So up on the bridge of the assault ship the navigating team are working long hours keeping a wary eye on the 'opportunities' offered by the Narvik coastline.

To quote Douglas Adams' Slartibartfast, the "lovely crinkly edges" leave little room to manoeuvre for ships of the size of the amphibious task group – a fact cheerfully acknowledged by Bulwark's Navigator Lt Cdr Chris Nelson: "In the Channel if something happens you can simply turn right and head out to sea. You won't hit land for at least 20 miles."

He indicates the snow-covered land visible from each of bridge windows, "Here it's challenging because there simply isn't an escape route."

Lt Adam Ballard, the deputy navigator on board Bulwark,

pictures: la(phot) pepe hogan, po(phot) jonathan ha





n Norway

ended over a decade still a theatre for which lines hone their fighting ra Borealis has drawn fighting forces up to the ven reports from assault the exercise gathers

admits: “It is very well charted up to ¼ mile off the beach. But that’s where we like to go. And there are some uncharted small rocks out there...”

“It has very extreme polar weather,” he added. “The visibility can be absolutely clear, but then ten minutes later, a massive snowstorm sweeps in and there’s no visibility.”

“We’re suddenly confronted with the fact that we can’t see anything.”

“This is our first big tester,” said Lt Cdr Nelson. “A significant number of senior people have changed around. But the sailors are on a four or five year draft to the ship – they have stacks of experience.”

For now the exercise is in the Wader package, as movements and transfers are practised in advance of the onslaught of the Raider phase.

“It becomes less scripted – that’s when we start earning our pay,” commented Lt Cdr Nelson wryly.

Of course, the dramatic changes in weather are not just an issue for the navigators on board the warship; the challenges of the cold are a theme running through the heart of the ship, from the upper-deck and seaboard teams who operate in it, to the weapon engineers who require their equipment to operate in it, down to the chefs who have to cater for those who operate in it.

Not to mention the issues that come when a ship’s company is practically doubled with an embarked military force (EMF) and battle-staff, all with specific physical and technical requirements.

“It’s a really good test for all the equipment we have. The ship’s company don’t fully loadtest the system. When the

battlestaff arrive they push it to the limit,” said deputy weapons engineering officer Lt Mark Quinn pragmatically.

“The key is good early communication and a lot of planning. The other big challenge for the team is getting the equipment downtime to maintain the kit with so many more users on board.”

“There’s a huge challenge involved,” said Capt Blunden. “Reacting to the embarked staff and EMF, giving them the communications support that they need, a huge amount of IT support, that we can feed them and sustain them, operate the boat groups to land at a high tempo, logistics support to the EMF, medical and engineering support. Just keeping track of all this is task enough.”

“It places quite a strain on certain parts of the ship, cooking for a larger number of people, sustaining them. It’s feed, maintain, support – simple things like being able to provide enough hot water for them so that they can shower.”

“Bringing the whole of that together is really quite a challenge. We’re trying to plan ahead, think about all of the ‘what ifs’.

“And so far it has worked extraordinarily well.”

Planning began months before the assault ship headed north – lessons learnt from other ships in the Arctic were checked, a flurry of orders for protective cold-weather clothing despatched, the grease for the guns switched for a freeze-resistant brand, briefing on cold weather injuries, the list goes on...

But the fine detail of the preparations have paid off in the cold. CPO(AH) Andy Lewis looks out over his domain, Bulwark’s flightdeck: “The cold conditions were a shock to the system, but we were well-briefed.”

“Obviously it’s a very tiring environment – an hour out here makes you incredibly tired. But with flight awareness, you have to stay alert all the time.”

“But this is a close-knit team and we’re all keeping an eye on one another.”

Once the ship earnt her ‘blue

nose’ on arrival in the Arctic, routines changed as the deck teams had to limit their exposure to the cold atmosphere and the galleys whacked up the number of warming hot meals.

These are the same logisticians who are dealing with a ship’s company almost doubled with the EMF, and when absent from the galley or offices can be found monitoring the dock, hauling ropes as the ship comes alongside, or veiled by masks in firefighting gear.

WO Nick Battley, logistics officer catering services, admitted: “This stage of the exercise has a relatively stable notice of people moving. When it goes into free play, then it’s all very short notice – and our numbers change dramatically.”

“But the watchword of the catering services department is flexibility. Always has been, always will be.”

Royal Marines being Royal Marines, the green berets of 4 Assault Squadron, Bulwark’s resident landing craft unit, are relishing the Arctic experience.

“I love it. Out here we get to do the things we’re meant to do – hitting the beaches, getting the lads and vehicles ashore,” said Mne Marty Barrett.

As the exercise draws on to the main drama, Bulwark’s CO is clear on what it will show: “Bulwark is back in the front line as the high readiness LPD.

“Her company are well trained, well motivated and ready to undertake any task.

“That’s what the Royal Navy does; that’s what this ship is capable and ready to do.”

● *Pictures from top left: A view from the cockpit over Norway; 4ASRM landing craft carry tracked vehicles to the Harstad shore; clearing snow from the flightdeck of Ark Royal; ET(WE) Sam Roberts wraps up warm to man the minigun on Ark Royal; RFA Mounts Bay, NOCGV Andenes, HMS Cornwall, HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion; the snow falling on Bulwark’s flightdeck; and HMS Cornwall on officer of the watch manoeuvres*



42 and 45 at 30° below zero



● *Waders of the lost Arctic... Royal Marines of 45 Commando conduct wader drills on an isolated Norwegian beach during Armatura Borealis*
Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon, 45 Cdo

WE HAVE deliberately chosen to focus on the 'skimmer' input to this year's exercises in the Arctic Circle rather than the Royal Marines who traditionally grab the headlines in Norway.

The Royals were there in force again in 2008 – a good 1,500 of them.

So it would be unfair and rather rude to ignore them. Plus they have big guns and wield daggers...

With 40 Commando locked in mortal combat with the Taleban, it fell to 42 and 45 Commandos to grapple with the joys of fighting in the most unforgiving of environments under the umbrella of their parent unit, 3 Commando Brigade.

Many of the green berets are Arctic veterans (some were on their tenth trip); others were Arctic virgins, which meant earning their blue noses and a bit more to boot.

Veterans need reminding and novices need teaching about living in such bitter cold, so training for the Royals was split into three distinct phases – survival, mobility and combat – in the three-week Cold Weather Warfare Course.

Survival comes first: experienced RM mountain leaders teach their 'flock' the basics of life in the Arctic, leaving weapons firmly at home. Avoiding cold-weather injuries such as frostbite, coping with avalanches, maintaining kit – all these nuggets of information based on more than half a century of operating in Norway were imparted by the mountainmen.



The ski (or pusser's plank) is key to mobility in the snow. It is not only man which moves by ski, but also much of his kit. Four-man teams haul the bare necessities – tents, stoves, food, fuel – on sledges, known as pulks. Pulks are heavy – and add to the commando's already onerous burden; the Bergen packs on the men's back can weigh up to 100lb fully loaded.

Luckily, there are man-made beasts to ease the burden. The BV tracked vehicles are tried and tested kit.

They can tow up to 16 men at a time in a manoeuvre known as 'ski jorring'.

So, we've mastered survival and moving, time for the fighting. Everything is slower and more cumbersome in the Arctic: breaking contact on skis, for example, is far more physically demanding than in a temperate environment. Still, by the end of three weeks of rigorous training, the Royals were able to conduct 'attacks' in company strength.

And as the old Royals' saying goes: If you can fight and survive in Norway, you can do it anywhere.

Of course, not all the Royals slither around on skis or skulk in foxholes carved out of the Norwegian snow.

There is a sizeable contingent with the amphibious force: Albion and Bulwark each have a permanent RM assault squadron.

Moving from ship to shore is always a challenge, a challenge which intensifies among the fjords in winter.

A small team is sent inshore initially in small boats to conduct a recce, which includes sending two swimmers into the water (briefly, admittedly, given the temperature in the Arctic).

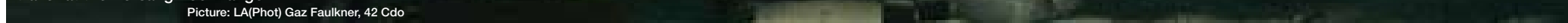
Thanks to good charts, the Royals know the rough outline of the shore, but for accuracy manual soundings are needed from those swimmers.

Once they're happy, they mark up potential landing sites with white or infra-red lights.

"It's good to get on the beach and crack on. Every situation is different, we've got to try to second guess what will be thrown at us every day," explained beach master C/Sgt David Bartholomew of 4 Assault Squadron RM.

"In five minutes it can close right down and potentially we're looking at a survival situation. "Batteries, navigation aids, GPS – the cold sucks power straight out of them. We keep the vehicles running to keep the batteries charged."

● *Fire in the night... The mortar troop of 42 Commando let rip with their weapon hauled on a BV trailer at the Porsangmoen range*
Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner, 42 Cdo



Campaign keeps veterans informed

VETERANS from the South West – including former RAF serviceman Cllr David James, the Lord Mayor of Plymouth – were presented with Veterans Badges at a ceremony which launched a two-week campaign to publicise the work of the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency under the Veterans-UK name.

Veterans Minister Derek Twigg handed out badges at the presentation on board HMS Portland at Devonport Naval Base, accompanied by the Deputy Lieutenant of Devon, Lt Col Tim Courtenay, in the presence of over 30 representatives from local ex-Service organisations.

Veterans-UK was launched in April 2007 to provide a focal point for accessing services for veterans from the many different sources of help available.

The first services using the name are the Veterans-UK helpline, 0800 169 2277, and website www.veterans-uk.info – providing advice on issues such as disability pensions, benefits, housing, medals and much more.

The Veterans Welfare service is also available to provide one-to-one advice, in the home if needed, including liaising with local authorities, finding local support groups or even just helping with completing forms.

The Veterans Badge was launched in May 2004 for World War 1 and World War 2 veterans. Since then availability has been gradually extended.

Veterans wishing to apply for a badge should contact the Veterans-UK helpline on 0800 169 2277.

Postal applications go to Veterans Services, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA), Norcross, Blackpool, FY5 3WP.

Applicants should provide their name, address, date of birth, service number, period of service and theatres of service.

Engineering firm marks bicentenary

ENGINEERING company D Napier and Son celebrates its bicentenary this year, one of the highlights being a special weekend display.

Napier produced many innovative designs, including stamp-perforating machines, cars and aero and rocket engines.

They also produced the Deltic engines which powered the Navy's Dark-class patrol boats.

For details of Napier Powerex 200 on June 21-22 at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quainton, see www.napierheritage.org.uk



● The Buccaneer is nursed through the outskirts of Leicester in March 1988

Anniversaries for Buccaneer

TWO anniversaries for an iconic Naval aircraft have been celebrated at the Newark Air Museum.

A set of temporary markings has been unveiled on Blackburn Buccaneer S1 XN964 to highlight 50 years of the aircraft and 20 years since this particular machine came to Newark.

Originally owned by the Loughborough and Leicester Air Museum, it was bought by Newark and transferred as a wide load early on a Sunday morning in March 1988.

The temporary markings – an unusual departure for the museum – were designed by the man leading

USS Slater honours wartime RN frigates

A VETERAN was able to take a big step back in time when he and a colleague visited the United States for an ex-Service convention.

Don Hitchcock, chairman of the Captain Class Frigate Association, travelled with Association treasurer Ralph Parkes-Pfeil to Albany in New York State for the 32nd DESA (Destroyer Escort Sailors Association) Convention.

The event focussed on the USS Slater, the last remaining Destroyer Escort of the 563 built at yards around the US in 1943-45.

Of these, 78 were allocated to the RN under Lease-Lend, and were named after Nelson's captains.

As the RN ships did not have torpedo tubes (enabling them to carry more depth charges), they were reclassified as frigates.

Although some of the American ships went on to see service in the Korean War, Vietnam and the Cold War of the 1970s, the USS Slater is the last survivor of the design.

She had been sold to the Greeks in 1951, and with her active life over, she was the subject of an ambitious recovery programme by DESA.

She was towed from Greece to New York, where she underwent a transformation to take her back to her classic fighting configuration.

Original parts were found in Mexican scrapyards, and a team went south to fetch them back in two huge pantechnicons – a 1,700-mile journey each way.

She now sits at Snow Dock on the Hudson River in Albany, but although she looks well, her hull is becoming increasingly fragile.

The cost of dry-docking and repair work is put at around \$3 million, and one aspect of the visit by the British pair was to help

raise the profile of the American heritage appeal – and to mark the overlap between the interests of DESA and the Captain Class Frigates Association (CCFA).

“By helping them we can help ourselves to have a visible memorial to all of the 78 frigates, the 17 we lost and over 700 British sailors who died and are now remembered on the CCFA Roll of Honour,” said Don Hitchcock.

“I cherished the conducted tour of the USS Slater, and stepped back to being 19 years old again.

“The mess decks, the WT room – I was a coder there – the chart room with HF/DF in place, the original radar and simulated ASDIC had all the appearances of a World War 2 frigate.

“Time went into reverse and memories, stowed away for over 60 years, flooded back

“The USS Slater will be a permanent memorial to UK-US co-operation and the endeavour to protect seaborne trade during World War 2, and eventually to mount a return to the European mainland and secure the island bases in the Pacific theatre,” added Mr Hitchcock.

As the representative of the CCFA, Mr Hitchcock was invited to speak to supportive Congressmen, to appear on TV and to address the AGM of the DESA.

He also invited DESA representatives to the annual CCFA reunion in Warwick, which takes place on the first weekend of this month.

The two Britons took part in a memorial service on board the Slater, dropping white carnations into the Hudson River in memory of Captain-class frigate sailors who died in the war.

As survivors from each of the lost American ships also dropped carnations into the river, a volley of rifle shots was followed by

a three-gun salute from Slater's main armament.

“The last time I had heard the 3/50s go off was in 1945 – a gap of 62 years,” said Mr Hitchcock.

To support the USS Slater or send a donation, contact Mr Hitchcock at 101 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, Coventry CV7 7EU.



Big Cig is left out in the cold

HMS ENDURANCE has played her part in No Smoking Day by giving Big Cig the cold shoulder.

For Big Cig's third appearance with the RN he was escorted to the ice patrol ship by CINCFleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, who was visiting the Red Plum.

Once there he was dumped on

a passing iceberg by the ship's medical team, as pictured above.

Principal Medical Officer Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner thought Antarctica was an ideal place to quit.

“Either it's a crystal clear sunny day and it's almost criminal to pollute the environment with the

smoke, or it's blowing a gale and is -20°, and it's just too cold to stand shivering on deck,” he said.

The Endurance picture was used by the No Smoking Day health charity in its annual publicity campaign.

Ten sailors on board Endurance have stopped smoking this year.

TRI-SERVICES AND FAMILIES HOLIDAY CENTRE

The Nuffield Centre is a Tri-Service personnel and families accommodation facility can be used as a base to conduct administrative training, this has been made possible by a major grant from the Nuffield Trust. The centre is located at Llandudno on the Isle of Anglesey. We have nine family rooms with en suite showers and WC, for service families. One of the rooms has facilities for the disabled and we also cater for the language of families. There are fully equipped communal self-catering kitchens and dining rooms provided for families. Additionally, there is dormitory style accommodation (Morgue Bay) for up to 40 people in rooms of 4 to 8, with their own communal self-catering kitchen and dining room, equipped chef required.

The Nuffield Centre can also cater for up to 4 family size rooms on the camp site located next to the Golf Course, recently opened, the Nuffield Training Centre facilities include showers, toilets, and a large hall with a bar and kitchen. One of the rooms has facilities for the disabled and we also cater for the language of families. There are fully equipped communal self-catering kitchens and dining rooms provided for families. Additionally, there is dormitory style accommodation (Morgue Bay) for up to 40 people in rooms of 4 to 8, with their own communal self-catering kitchen and dining room, equipped chef required.

The Nuffield Training Centre offers a wide range of courses and activities for you - on the dates that you want them. Just contact us and tell us what you want, when you want it. There is also a bar on the water for you and your family or for your unit, regardless of size or a specific RYA course or perhaps a series of courses. Besides providing RYA courses, we can offer activities such as swimming, water skiing, dinghy sailing, waterborne sailing and power boating. We can also offer self-catering, waterborne position training, water building exercises and other activities. Just telephone or e-mail us to discuss what you want.

We can also arrange coastal cruising, here about a regional wall around Anglesey 5.

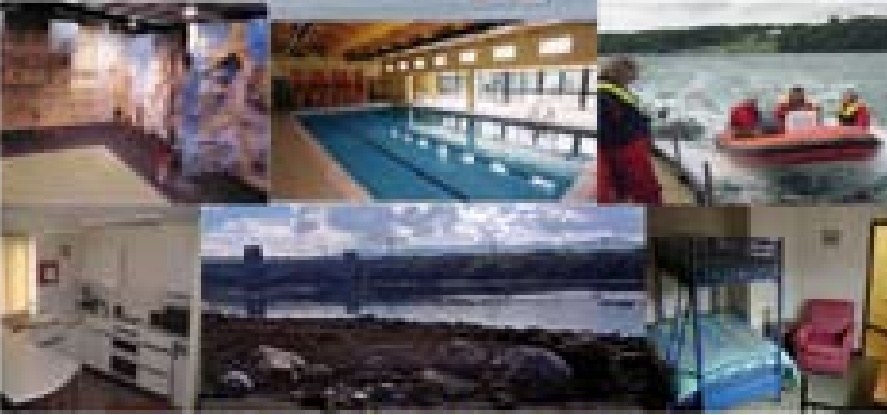
Groups and welcome to use the facilities with a history overlooking the Welsh coast and the beautiful sea offer your site on the water. For boat owners who are members of the annual services, we have eight moorings in the Marine Basin used to 11 more available to rent each season at extremely advantageous rates, and boat storage when available at the Nuffield Centre with professional slipway access at all times of the tide, again at extremely advantageous rates.

The Centre also has a robust climbing wall which offers beginners and experts alike a chance to learn and improve their skills. The top rope wall has 22 m-rope ropes with various routes from "easy" to "hard" with a "tower" for practicing rope work systems. The lead wall has over 30 routes ranging from a steady climb to lead routes in 8" overhangs on three different types of wall surface.

There are also 2 m-rope "water towers" (covering a total of 4 routes). As well as the water walls the facility has some of the best climbing of any wall. Our climbing wall is "rock textured" with an overhang and built on boulders with routes from "easy" to "hard". Our new free-standing boulder has 4 m-rope routes of varying angles with over 10 routes from "VT" to "V11" (Vary hard). All routes are regularly checked by our climbing instructor staff; they are always on hand to offer help and advice. The Climbing Centre also has a full all-terrain refreshments, meeting area, showers and changing facilities. Also available in the outdoor pavilion they offering the outdoors with a 10% military discount.

- Family rooms £90 per week, £35 weekend and £20 per night.
- Dormitory Bed £2.50 pppn
- Dormitory Block £100 per night.

- Watersport prices available on request.
- Climbing wall prices start from £3.00 per person
- Campsite £4 per tent per night



TEL/FAX: 01248 718362 or mll 95581 7962

www.nuffieldanglesey.org.uk

email: facilities@nuffieldanglesey.org.uk



Doges' dilemma

THANK you all for your responses to my picture of the ship in front of the Doges' Palace.

I had a letter from Mr Gladden, who lives in Great Yarmouth and was a stoker mechanic on board at the time.

It is HMS Liverpool in the middle of January 1949, he also has an exact copy of that picture.

— Tom Hay, Turriff, Aberdeenshire

Letters are still coming in, with Liverpool and Sheffield being the front-runners. The clincher for me is a letter from Lt Mark Vet, Fighter Controller 1 in HMS Liverpool. He was reading Navy News while having his lunch in the wardroom (as you do) and noticed the exact same photograph on the bulkhead. So as he said, it's definitely Liverpool — or his ship has got the wrong picture — Ed

T-boat target practice

I TOO have a set of photographs of HMS Ausonia being torpedoed by practice torpedoes. It took place as part of a 'families' day.

Unfortunately after dropping the families off and setting off for Greece we had a luboil failure to one of the engine bearings and we were towed back to Malta for repairs, on completion of which we brought her home for scrap.

Our submarine squadron, in my time on her in 1963-64, was S/M5 and consisted of Tiptoe, Turpin and Thermopylae, as Tiptoe was in the dockyard at Malta, being 'stretched' the torpedoes would have been fired by either Turpin or Thermopylae.

— Brian Wilkinson, Kingswood, Bristol

...THANK YOU for the wonderful memory that your photo of HMS Ausonia being attacked by dummy torpedoes off Malta in 1964 brought back.

At the time I was a 21-year-old stoker on watch down the engine room, and remember the chief ERA telling me to 'gag' the trips on the steam generator in case they tripped out during the attack.

Even though we had been warned, when the torpedo hit the engine room port hull plating the bang was terrific and I can assure you that we all needed a change of underwear!

Thanks once again for the memory of a very happy ship.

— Peter Lambourne, Rochester, Kent

Wrong guy

THERE is a slight error in *The Grove Review* (March).

Your *Ship* was not written by Capt Guy Hodgkinson, but by Lt Cdr R H (Hugh) Hodgkinson, the recent CO of HMS Pythley, who left the Navy soon afterwards to become a very successful schoolmaster.

When I became CinC Western Fleet in 1970 I reissued this booklet, re-edited and brought up to date by Captain (later Vice Admiral Sir) Roderick MacDonal, the then Captain of the Fleet.

— Admiral Sir William O'Brien
Prof Grove was grateful to have this additional information — Ed



● No anti-flash for the Royal Horse Artillery as they carry out a Gun Salute

Picture: Soldier Magazine

Smoke and fury

I WAS amused by Lt Cdr Nicholls' letter 'The Right Precautions' (March) about gun salutes.

If this policy is followed by the Army, will we expect to see the Royal Horse Artillery arriving for the Queen's Birthday Parade salute dressed in anti-flash gear? And what about the horses?

The reference to the Queen's Birthday salute reminds me of June 2 1964. HMS Lynx tied up against the wall in Simonstown Harbour with HMS Jaguar tied up outboard of us.

We had two saluting guns rigged on our port side to fire over the jetty with the standby gun rigged on the starboard side.

Jaguar had two guns rigged to fire over the harbour

with her spare gun set up on the port side.

Both spare guns were manned. Fortunately neither of us had a misfire so we never found out if the gunner on the misfiring ship would have ordered the spare gun to take up the saluting sequence.

I know that our Chief GI (Charlie Heffard) would have severely frowned on any one of our saluting guns crew who flinched at the gun making a noise.

He might have smiled whilst doing so to the stand-by guns crew who were on the receiving end in the case of a misfire.

I shared the salute with Her Majesty with my wife by the way, as at 1100 that day I received a signal saying that mother and newborn son were well.

— Roger Breakwell, East Cosham, Portsmouth



● British and American officers pictured with Igor Sikorsky, his designers and the flying instructor at the Sikorsky factory in 1943

Sikorsky's first flight

BACK in May 2007 you published a letter from Mr F Udell asking if it was true that a helicopter landed on the deck of HMS Campania early in 1943.

I can assure him that it is not true. Early in March 1943, when I was a Leading Air Fitter in the Fleet Air Arm, I was posted with several others to Gourrock in Scotland where we boarded the liner Queen Elizabeth. We sailed to America, landed in Nova Scotia and took a train to Asbury Park on the east coast.

After a few days we travelled to Connecticut and met a Lt Cdr RNVR, a Lt Tyler RN and three RAF officers. So far no one had told us what we were in America for.

We were driven to the Sikorsky Aircraft factory on the outskirts of Bridgeport. Here at the factory we

were given details of the helicopter designed by Igor Sikorsky. In a nearby field we saw a display of its capabilities. It was a very crude machine but had all the necessary components to fly up, down, backwards and sideways.

For the remainder of our mission we were given instruction and assisted in the production of the first helicopters. The first two were destined for the US Army, the second two went to the US Navy and the next two were for the Fleet Air Arm.

After the two helicopters were handed over to the British officers and the two pilots, RAF Lt Gable and Lt Cdr Peat, had completed their flying instruction, we were embarked on a large merchant ship, HMS Dagerston, along with the two helicopters. The ship had a platform built on the stern large

enough for the helicopters to fly off and return.

We joined the convoy to return to England in October 1944. On arrival at Liverpool we had an unfortunate mishap with one of the helicopters, but that's another story. The helicopters finally flew to the General Aircraft factory in Feltham near London. After a short period at this factory I was drafted back to Lee-on-Solent.

I haven't given the exact dates of this assignment to America but the approximate dates are taken from my Certificate of Service. There must be Naval records of the correct dates to justify what I have written, but there were no helicopters in this country in early 1943 as stated in the *Navy News* letter.

— W Moore, Owlthorpe, Sheffield

Sad goodbye

I WOULD like to reply to Mr Benson's letter (*February*) regarding the disgust and anger he feels towards about the way his son was treated when he left the service.

Being discharged with a sheet of paper signed by an 'Able Rate Writer' is of little importance. Allowing himself to become annoyed by this shows he is not appreciating the point.

I would remind Mr Benson that his son has very valuable skills and training to take to a civilian employer, courtesy of the Navy, he has been paid a sizeable (tax-free) gratuity and now enjoys an (index-linked) pension for the rest of his life.

For my part, I realise the benefits that my time in service has brought me and feel very grateful for them.

I joined the RN at about the same time as his son with £3 to my name. My one remaining parent died before I completed branch training and I joined the Fleet technically an orphan.

My rise through the ranks was more glacial than meteoric and I left after 23 years' service as a Leading Hand.

However, upon termination of service, I was able to use my gratuity to pay off a mortgage on a sizeable family home. Personally, I do not think that is a bad trade-off for 23 working years of my life.

So I urge Mr Benson to adopt the "my glass is half-full not half-empty" attitude and appreciate the benefits his son's time in service will have brought him.

Regarding the demob suit, if Mr Benson's son ever feels the need for a suit and trilby, I am quite sure he is perfectly able to go out and buy one under his own steam!

— Jim Hudson, West Rainton, Co Durham

...WHILST serving in Naples in 2001 I and approximately 150 other people were invited to attend the retirement ceremony of a US Navy senior chief who had completed 21 years' service.

The guest list included all senior NATO officers including

my boss, a Rear Admiral. The 6th Fleet band played, speeches were made, a Navy Chief recited a poem. Flags, certificates and plaques were presented, tears were shed (some very nearly by an RM officer). Afterwards I remarked to my boss that my retirement ceremony would be much different.

July 7 2002 was topped off by five minutes in an office where I exchanged my ID card for a computer-generated A4 certificate in a plastic ring-binder sleeve, two leaflets from the RNR and RNA and a piece of A4 with a UPO stamp to let me out of the main gate.

Thus I sympathise with Mr Benson, it certainly took the shine off my 22 years' service. Surely those who reach pensionable age of all ranks and rates are worth more than two bits of A4.

— Paul 'Taff' Thomas, former Leading Chef, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion

... I SYMPATHISE with D Benson. I left the Service in September 2005 as a Chief Petty Officer after 40 years and four months of service (man and boy).

My Valedictory Certificate was handed to me by a Leading Writer at HMS Nelson during my leaving routine. It was not framed and there was no mention that this could or should be presented to me at my last unit.

Unless there have been great strides in the last two-and-a-half years, the whole process of leaving the Royal Navy seems very basic and clinical when compared with the other Armed Services.

Having spoken with former members of the Royal Marines, Army and RAF, I conclude that their process for dealing with retirees seems to be far superior, with presentations from senior or commanding officers as the norm.

Come on the RN, let's make people who are leaving after lengthy periods of service feel appreciated.

— Gordon Trenell, (former CCY and CPO Careers Advisor), Blackpool



● The senior members of HMS Scott's wardroom — back row, left to right, Mr Kohler, Lt Cdr Jenks, the Rev Lamb, Cdr Swain, Lt Bullock, front row, Lt Jones, Lt Cdr Buck and Lt Mitchell

Golden oldies

THE 14 officers of HMS Scott wonder if they presently comprise the oldest wardroom afloat under the White Ensign, with an average age of 37 years.

They have no 'Young Officers' and no officer below the rank of

lieutenant. The youngest Lt is 24, the next youngest is almost 30.

At the other end of the scale there are two wardroom members in their 50s.

Can any RN ship beat this?
— Lt Paul Mitchell, HMS Scott

opinion

WHEN the Armed Forces stopped wearing their uniforms in public in the 1970s, the serious threat came from the IRA. Now it seems that it comes from within our own country.

Men and women from RAF Wittering have been banned from wearing uniform in public for their own safety, after being abused on the streets of Peterborough.

How gratifying it would be to exercise the Freedom of the City and march with bayonets fixed through the very streets where they were intimidated. It would also give the majority in Peterborough a chance to turn out and show their support.

However, it would not help those who have to run the

The views expressed in Navy News do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence

gauntlet of this abuse every day.

Nor would it solve the deeper malaise of a lack of respect for our Armed Forces. It is not just the bullies in Peterborough who show it. The well-heeled neighbours of Headley Court who objected to a residential home for the relatives of seriously-injured Servicemen displayed it, as did the students of University College, London, who used the votes they take for granted to ban all military personnel from links with the university.

The campaign for an 'Armed Forces Day', to pay tribute to our Services is a welcome start. But who would have thought, 30 years ago, that we would ever need it?



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CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGS



● This watercolour, *Up Spirits*, was painted by Derek Norris, of King's Lynn, to celebrate the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information.

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph that you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permissions for us to

publish it.

Given the impressive volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible – our space is limited.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



On a string and a prayer

PERMIT me to continue the saga of the much-lamented demise of the Navy rum issue.

When I was a Telegraphist (S) at HMS Anderson in Ceylon in 1943-45, we had a novel way to make a glass for our tot, which, much to this ex-destroyer sailor's disgust, was made up of three parts water to one part of the real stuff.

We used a beer bottle, around which we wrapped a strong string or cord about halfway down. We saw-sawed the string back and forth until the glass got hot, then plunged the bottle into a bucket of cold water.

The glass snapped, and we had a glass for our daily 11 o'clock rum issue.

Since I was on the other side of the pond when some joker at the Admiralty decided to discontinue "Up Spirits," I never found out what was the rationale for this crime against a tradition that harks back to Nelson's days.

In my day, the only booze allowed on board, apart from our rum ration, went to the wardroom, for the use of officers only.

I never did figure out why officers could be trusted to imbibe the hard stuff and still carry out their duties on board, and we lower deck ratings could not.

— Kenneth A Tipper, Ocala, Florida

... MARY Holmes' letter (*January*) about her husband's misfortune with his tot tumbler brings back memories of my first tot (and that's all they are, just memories).

I was in Belfast when I went 'G'. At that 'tot time' there I was in the mess on my birthday, awaiting my first tot, when the Padre came visiting.

Everyone in the mess offered him a wet which he accepted, then it was my turn.

Grasping my tot in his hand the Padre wished me a "Happy Birthday" and saw it off in one amidst great merriment from the associated onlookers.

After he had atoned for his misdeed, and despite my being an atheist, he and I got on well together, sharing many quiet chuckles.

— Basil Hudson, Hanworth, Middlesex

... YOUR feature about HMS Sidon exploding (*December*) brought back memories.

We were doing sea training in HMS Porchester Castle, having completed training at HMS Ariel and one day six of us went over to HMS Maidstone to have a day out in a submarine.

Two of us went on HMS Untiring and two on HMS Sidon. The next day HMS Sidon sank! The two guys who went out in her counted their blessings they were not on board when that happened. I enjoyed my day out, my offside dropped his hat down the periscope well – which the Captain really liked.

I had my first drop of rum – when the rum came up we all hung around and as there was only one glass they filled it up and passed it round and when it got to me I said "I am UA." They said: "We are all in this boat together, so have a sip" and this went on till the fanny was empty and I was very happy.

— Robin H 'Slinger' Wood, Elizabeth South, South Australia

For the benefit of younger readers, 'UA' stood for under age, 'G' for grog, and 'T' for temperance, for which the non-partaking sailors got an allowance of 3d a day in lieu of the tot.

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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Nephew honours his brave uncle

THE nephew of a soldier who died in the withdrawal from Norway in 1940 is travelling to Scandinavia to pay tribute to his uncle.

Pte Andrew Lee was a 27-year-old bugler with the Hallamshire Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment which had been trying to hold back the Nazis in Norway.

Andrew was one of the 36-man rearguard, the last of 5,400 British and French troops to be evacuated from Namsos.

A further 6,600 had already been plucked to safety from Åndalsnes, south of Trondheim.

Early on May 3 Andrew and his 35 companions trudged aboard destroyer HMS Afridi, the last escort to leave central Norway, but soon after dawn Allied ships came under attack.

Dive bombers struck the French destroyer Bison, and Afridi stopped to haul 69 survivors from the sea, the surface of which was covered in burning oil.

Two hours later the British ship was hit by two bombs, killing 53 of the ship's company, 35 Frenchmen and 13 soldiers – including Andrew.

A memorial in Namsos, inscribed with the names of nine RN ships and three British regiments which suffered casualties, was unveiled by the British ambassador in 2000.

The Friends of Namsos War Memorial have taken part in ceremonies in Norway every year since 2000, including the Norwegian, French and Russian PoW memorials as well as the British version, and also joined Norwegians in their country's Constitution Day celebrations.

One of those making the trip across the North Sea this year will be George Lee, nephew of Andrew and himself a PO in the Fleet Air Arm during the war.

George, who will lay flowers on the memorial, said: "It was a very sad day when I learned of Andrew's death."

"But his family knew nothing about how he died until we heard recently about the memorial and I decided to come to Namsos with my son and his wife."

"I would like relatives of men in any of the Services who took part in the campaign in Norway to consider joining us in May."

For details of the annual visit contact the Friends of Namsos War Memorial at 72 Warwick Gardens, London W14 8PP, tel 0207 603 1396 or email aajg@btinternet.com

Gift Aid plea

RNA HQ feels that following the change from covenanting to Gift Aid, momentum on Gift Aid has been lost.

The number of Gift Aid forms, from a membership of 27,680 stands at a "modest" 3,500.

HQ reminds members that this is 'free money', which has helped to maintain the annual subscription at £10.

A blank Gift Aid form is included with the February Newsletter at Annex B, and once completed, a Gift Aid declaration lasts until it is rescinded.

CTCRM welcomes LST&LCA

A "MOST enjoyable" visit was undertaken by the Devon Regional Group of the LST and Landing Craft Association to the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) at Lympstone.

For most of the group it was their first glimpse of the establishment where those who aspire to wear the green beret undertake their gruelling training.

The three-hour visit started with a buffet lunch in the Sergeants' Mess, after which

there was a video presentation encompassing the many facets of the course undertaken by a Royal Marines Commando in training.

The visitors were then taken on a tour of the centre, including the CTCRM museum.

After a brief pause for light refreshments, the group dispersed for photographs and then headed for home.

Group chairman S/M Maurice Hillebrandt said: "Such was our pleasure at this event and the warm treatment we received from

all whom we met at CTCRM that it was felt that the occasion might be commemorated by presenting our group plaque for addition to many similar plaques embellishing the wall of the Sergeants' Mess.

"This was undertaken on February 26 when I and the Group Regional Representative, together with our wives, presented the plaque to the WO1 (RSM) in the presence of a couple of dozen or so sergeants assembled for the brief ceremony."

Blackpool gears up for Veterans Week

BLACKPOOL is gearing up to host a week of celebrations in honour of veterans.

Veterans Minister Derek Twigg announced at the end of January that the seaside town had beaten off stiff competition to win the event.

And now the local council, in partnership with the Fylde Ex-

Service Liaison Committee, has committed to "honour and unite all who served."

Building on the experience of the three previous events, Blackpool has unveiled an ambitious programme of events which will take place over nine days from Saturday June 21 to Sunday June 29.

While the veterans will take centre stage – whatever their age

– there will also be plenty to keep the rest of the public entertained.

The week will begin with military role demonstrations, exhibitions and recruitment opportunities – and it is hoped that one of the highlights will be a beach assault and landing by Royal Marines.

Throughout the week veterans will be invited to deliver talks and readings recounting their experiences, and a local cinema will be stage free screenings of films depicting life during World War 2.

The famous Pleasure Beach amusement park is planning – weather permitting – to hoist a huge banner on The Big One, Europe's tallest roller coaster, displaying the Veterans Helpline number.

The amusement park is also offering a two-for-one promotion for veterans during the week, helping to attract a younger audience.

Wednesday June 25 will see a veterans gala dinner, and there will also be air races, a golf day, cricket match and beach show all geared to veterans of all ages.

The town's Victorian North Pier will be the main focus for National Veterans Day itself – Friday June 27.

Golf buggies will help transport

veterans along the pier which will act as a centre for information, socialising and entertainment, while a stage and screen will be erected on the promenade close to the pier.

Announcing the decision in January to award the event to Blackpool, Derek Twigg said: "Veterans are of all ages with a variety of different backgrounds, and they all deserve our recognition."

"Not only have they honoured their commitment to defend our country's interests in service, they have also used their skills and experiences to enrich their local communities."

"With the establishment of an annual Veterans Day, each year June 27 is our chance to recognise the achievements of those veterans who live amongst us."

Southport will stage its own Veterans Day on Sunday June 29 in Princes Park, in conjunction with the Veterans Agency and the Veterans Fund.

The day will include contributions from Forces careers teams, cadets, bands, ex-Service associations and charities, with the RNA and Sea Cadets among them.

Organisers hope this will eventually become an annual event.



● *Sport played a big part in the Naval career of World War 2 veteran Dave McGaw – but he has had to wait a long time for one of his greatest sporting achievements. The ex-PTI achieved his first hole-in-one at the age of 82 at the third hole of the Swinton Park course in Manchester. Dave joined the Navy in 1941 and served in HMS King George V until 1946, when he qualified as a clubswinger at Pitt Street in Portsmouth. He was also Senior Rating i/c Royal Tournament in 1961 and the Edinburgh Tattoo in 1962*

Time travellers

SHIPMATES from the Wetherby branch enjoyed a trip to a Heritage Weekend in the Portsmouth area.

Their itinerary gave them the opportunity to visit all the attractions in the Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth, and to venture across the water to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.

They also visited the most recent addition to the sights of Portsmouth, the Spinnaker Tower.

Supported by an Awards for All grant from the Big Lottery Fund, shipmates were able to share the experience with colleagues from Harrogate and Leeds branches.

The grant helped to cover transportation, accommodation and entrance fees.

Wetherby branch chairman S/M Fred Wake said: "We are not getting any younger and some are not able to visit the venues independently."

"The group supported each

other as required, reflecting the comradeship that our organisation fosters."

"The grant also enabled us to pick up locally and provide transport directly to the venues."

"We are most grateful for the support received from Awards for All."

Warwick seeks U-boat victims

WARWICK branch has been asked to help trace survivors from a ship sunk by a U-boat in 1942 – and which features in a bizarre wartime coincidence.

It has recently been established that the SS Warwick Castle, a troop transport of just over 20,000 tons, was torpedoed on November 14 some 200 miles north-west of Cape Espichel, Portugal by U413.

By a strange coincidence, this is the same submarine which sank HMS Warwick on February 20 1944 off the north coast of Cornwall.

The enemy boat survived a further six months before succumbing to depth charges off Brighton.

The management of Warwick Castle plan to plant an oak tree in the grounds of the castle in memory of the ship, and have asked Warwick branch for help in tracking down survivors of the troop ship, whichever Service they were in at the time.

Replies should be sent to AJ Coles, 41 Coventry Road, Warwick, CV34 5HN.

Writers compile list of victims

AT THEIR 18th annual reunion dinner, held in the WO&SR mess in HMS Drake, members of the Westcountry Association of RN Writers had an unusual addition to their toast to 'Absent Friends'.

Following the list of members unable to attend came the mention of those writers lost at sea.

Former Chief Writer Graham Jewell, the association's archivist, made the toast, having compiled the names of writers listed on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, showing all from the Devonport Division lost with no known grave.

Further research revealed details of the ships involved plus Christian names, official numbers, ages and where the sinkings occurred.

All told there were 107 of the branch named, from 1st Writer Riddells, who went down with HMS Monmouth at the Battle of Coronel in the early days of World War 1 to the loss of PO Writer Munn and Writer Edwards when HMS Saumarez struck a mine in the Adriatic in October 1946.

The list for World War 1 also included seven of the writers' predecessors, clerks and assistant clerks, a rank that was rendered obsolete by the formation of the Writers Branch in 1867.

A dozen writers from the Royal Australian Navy and two from the South African Naval Force are also remembered on the memorial.

Losses were not only from HM ships.

Four of the writers remembered were taking passage in troopships and another four died when the infamous unmarked Japanese ship Lisbon Maru, transporting Allied prisoners of war to slave labour in Japan, was torpedoed by the American submarine Grouper.

It is hoped that the RN Writers Association, which claims to be the world's oldest military association, having been established in 1887, can arrange for similar lists to be compiled for the memorials in Portsmouth and Chatham, now that the title of writer is no longer extant, having been superseded by logistician (personnel).

Token of gratitude

D BOAT Association secretary Mike Smith visited the Rev Albert Braithwaite at his home in Southsea to present him with an inscribed crystal decanter with the D Boats crest to thank him for 25 years loyal service to the Association.

The following day Association treasurer Jo Smith went to St Ann's Church in Portsmouth Naval Base to meet the Rev Martin Poll, who has agreed to become the D Boats' new chaplain.

Jo had made a kneeler with the D Boats crest and Silver Jubilee on the side.

The kneeler was presented to the church during the Sunday morning service.

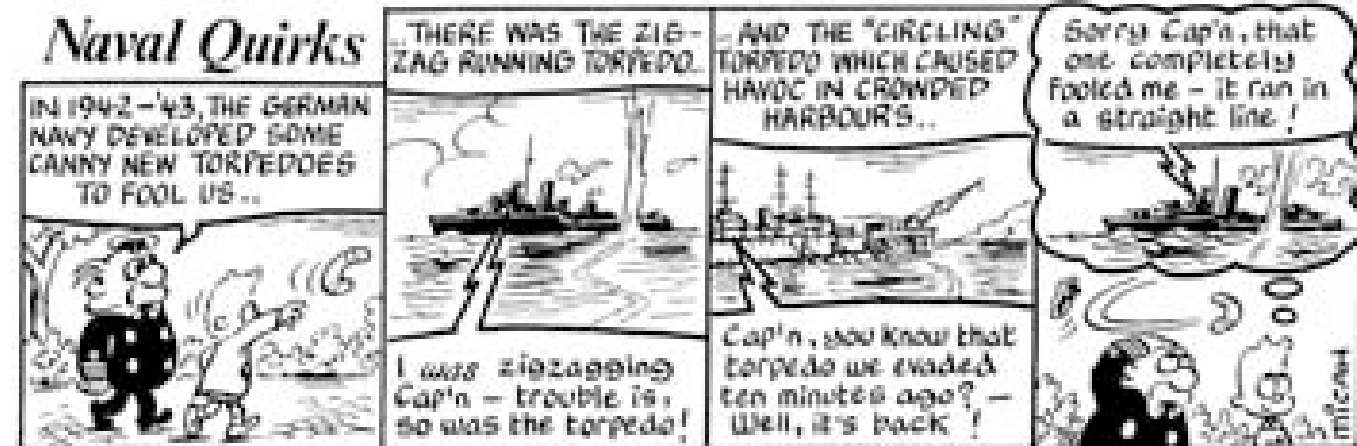
SAMA plaque for Millom

MILLOM and District branch in Cumbria was presented with a SAMA 82 plaque at their branch meeting in January as a result of a fund-raising effort.

The plaque was presented to vice chairman S/M Liz Watson as a mark of appreciation for the £1,200 which the branch raised for SAMA 82 and the Falklands Veterans Foundation.

The money was raised during a dinner to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the South Atlantic war, and the evening culminated in an auction that raised even more cash.

Millom and District is only two years old, but has already raised more than £2,000 for ex-Service charities, air and army cadet forces and other local charities.



Service recalls trench warfare

THE ANNUAL Collingwood Memorial Service will take place on Friday June 6 at the memorial in Blandford Camp, Dorset.

The trustees of the Collingwood Battalion Royal Naval Division Memorial and the president and members of the Blandford and District branch have once again invited those who wish to pay their respects to the gallant men of the Anson, Benbow, Collingwood, Drake, Howe, Hood, Nelson, Hawke Battalions and the Royal Marine Battalions of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham and Deal who gave their lives in the service of their country.

The memorial, of polished marble, was originally unveiled to the memory of the captain, officers and men of the Collingwood Battalion who died at Gallipoli on June 4 1915.

Those who wish to attend should first notify Roy Adam at Camvere House, 3 Portman Road, Pimperne, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8UJ, tel 01258 453797, with details of car registration number.

Attendees will gather from midday onwards at the Anvil Hotel, Pimperne (on the A354) for introductions and lunch, and tea will be laid on afterwards at the HQ Mess Royal Signals, courtesy of the chairman of the North Dorset District Council and the Commander Blandford Garrison, Brig Ted Flint.

New chairman

BUXTON and High Peak branch have elected S/M Mike Evans as chairman in succession to S/M David Parker.

A new committee was also voted in to serve for the next 12 months.

The branch meets at the Working Men's Club in Lightwood Road, Buxton, on the first Thursday of every month at 8pm, and new members are always welcome.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (right) was HMS Sabre, and the base was Gibraltar – as identified by Mr William Smith of Oxford, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's vessel was a versatile RMA ship which first appeared in the early 1960s.

Can you name her, and name her sister ship which was launched at the same yard within three months of her? We have removed her name from the picture

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Bridgend branch is forced to shut

BRIDGEND branch has been forced to close through lack of membership.

Former branch president S/M Thomas Naish announced the decision, noting with regret that the young sailor of today did not wish to support or join the association in the town.

"We had no choice but to end over 28 years service due to many of our members now being disabled or housebound," said S/M Naish.

The branch was formed in

October 1980, and the standard was dedicated in April 1983 at St Mary's Nolton church in Bridgend.

"It was only fitting that we should return our standard back to the same church for safekeeping," said S/M Naish.

"On Sunday February 17 an excellent ceremony took place with members from Lydney and Cheltenham, also local ex-Servicemen – Welsh Guards – and the WRNS standard-bearer was also present.

"The Revd Komor and others officiated and, as a life member

and ex-president of the church, I was able to thank, during my speech, all loyal members for their long service.

"During our time we made numerous friends and visited

other branches throughout the country.

"We also dedicated a lot of time and money to local charities for medical advancement – too many to mention by name."



● Billy Swift in front of his World War 2 Dodge command car in Normandy

Tribute to S/M Gordon

DURSLEY and District branch paraded their standard alongside that of No 7 Area to honour the passing of S/M William Gordon Taylor Harper.

Gordon was one of the stalwarts of the branch, which he joined in 1981, the year of its foundation.

Members formed an honour guard at St Bartholomew's Church in Lower Cam for the entry and exit of S/M Gordon's cortege in memory of "a wonderful shipmate who was always ready to serve the branch and always had a friendly word and smile for his shipmates."

D-Day memorial campaigner dies

WORLD War 2 veteran and memorial campaigner Billy Swift has died at the age of 85.

William Henry Swift, born in Hull in 1922, volunteered for the Royal Navy at the age of 18 in 1940.

As an HO (Hostilities Only) sailor, Billy managed to see action in many of the war's hot (and cold) spots.

He was on board the light cruiser HMS Cairo when it was sunk by the Italian submarine Axum during Operation Pedestal, the heroic and ultimately successful attempt to get food and supplies through to Malta in the summer of 1942. Billy was made an honorary citizen of Valletta in 2002.

He was on board the destroyer HMS Tuscan when she was badly damaged by a mine in the Bristol Channel in May 1943, after which he served in HMS Scourge (Russian convoys and D-Day) and HMS Bigbury Bay (Far East).

After the war Billy was instrumental in organising a number of reunions, including the 23rd Destroyer Flotilla.

As a result of this Billy and others began raising funds for a memorial to the men of the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy and Allied Navies who died during the invasion of Normandy. That memorial now stands at Hermanville.



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How to join

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82 Chelsea Manor Street

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Fax: 020 7352 7385

www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



'You may need us one day...'

A SHIPMATE from Kent is hoping to encourage serving sailors to support the Association.

S/M Mick Withington, of the Isle of Sheppey, said: "I wish many matelots would rid themselves of the concept that we are a bunch of bemedalled old chaps – I could put it in a matelot's colloquial terms but I do not think the editor would allow it.

"Well, yes, that is quite true, but we are not without a sense of humour and enjoy getting out and about together – the camaraderie that binds us together is our love of the Service.

"We all realise that the comparatively young man coming out of the Service today has nothing in common with us, bearing in mind the age difference and a young man's family commitments, but one day those will be a thing of the past.

"Although still attached to family you'll find you have time on your hands.

"Some sadly will be a widow

or widower, some will suffer from just plain loneliness, others will have to bear many aches and pains brought on by age.

"Oh yes – it happen to the fittest of us; it gradually creeps up on us.

"This is where you enjoy the association, because you will gradually build a circle of shipmates around you from far and wide simply by putting yourself out and joining in some of all that goes on and the discussions that take place.

"Do remember, oppos who are now in the Service, that you will be 'ex' one day.

"When you feel you are ready, join your nearest branch – come along.

"Because we are living longer many things beset us – you may well need us as just a friendly face to call and chat.

"You just don't know how good that can make you feel.

"Or think about being able to go to a reunion and lose yourself amongst your own."

S/M Withington cites the example of the biennial gathering/reunion of ex-matelots – no particular branch or ship – and their families and friends.

The Association takes over a holiday camp on Hayling Island from Friday afternoon until Monday morning, with entertainment laid on for all three days including an informal church service (no chaplain) with a parade of standards only in the auditorium where the entertainment takes place.

"Then, of course, there is 'Tot time', a Sods Opera, and lunch is served when we have finished," said S/M Withington.

"Then there is 'make and mend', with entertainment in the evening, finishing with great singalong, with everyone on the floor. All this for £90 – it can't be bad.

"At no time in all the years I have been going have I see anyone over the top with booze, although everyone thoroughly enjoys themselves, making great friends and looking forward to the next time."

Summing up, S/M Withington said: "There may come a time when you may well need us as a friendly face; a visit hospital or something just to stave off loneliness – there are many many reasons.

"I don't like being the prophet of doom but it could happen.

"The association will always be there for you – for £10 a year it can't be bad, can it?"

Helping heroes

ON READING about the 'Help for Heroes' charity in the January RNA circular, the Frinton and Walton branch have agreed to donate £250 to the cause, and stated that members were pleased that the National Council have adopted the charity for 2008.

MYSTERY PICTURE 158

Name

Address

My answers

What's in a name? Navy steals Army's thunder

THE plans for the warrant officers', senior rates' and senior non-commissioned officers' mess at HMS Excellent have now been given the green light after many designs and various locations. The new mess will be built behind the existing wardroom and will consist of three buildings, the main mess with public rooms, and two single-living accommodation blocks. WO2 Dai Bainbridge RM wrote to *Navy News* calling on our readers to help in the naming of the three blocks. He said: "The current mess is called the Edgar Evans building, named after PO Edgar Evans who was a member of Scott's Antarctic expedition. "As the mess has a number of fine artefacts, the current committee can see no reason to change the name of the new mess. "At present the naming convention for new accommodation blocks is to use personnel who have been awarded the Victoria Cross. "To that end it is intended to name the SLA after CPO Israel Harding and Sgt Norman Finch RM." He added: "The names for the new blocks are not set in concrete – but soon will be."

The Royal Marine requests that any reader who wishes to propose an alternative should write to him detailing their nomination and outlining the justification. Candidates will be presented to the mess committee for the decision-making process. Send your suggestions to: WO2 Dai Bainbridge RM, WOs, SRs and SNCOs Mess, HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8ER before June 30.

EDINBURGH resonated with the sound of the famous One O'clock Gun, but the explosive interlude was marked by the Royal Navy for the first time (*or so we are told – Ed*) in the Gun's 147-year history. However on this occasion the gun was not the usual light gun but a one-and-a-half tonne field gun, fired by a team from HMS Caledonia, which was hauled a mile through the city's streets to announce the start of the Sport Relief mile to its many runners. Breaking with all manner of traditions, the 18-man Naval team, led by PO(PT) Karl Hille, are also the first to have fired the One O'clock Gun on a Sunday. HMS Caledonia's commanding officer, Cdr Peter Adams, said: "We are creating a little bit of history with the firing of a One

O'clock Gun on a Sunday – but then, in a sense, it is only right and fitting. "In 1861, Scotsman Robert Wauchope, a captain in the Royal Navy, invented the time ball which can still be seen today on top of Nelson's monument on Calton Hill. "It was designed to give sailors on the Firth of Forth a reliable time signal. "But because they couldn't always rely on the weather allowing them to see the ball, a cannon was fired at the same time – and a tradition that is now known around the world was born." Runners could chose to run one, three or six miles for Sport Relief, one of 23 similar events taking place across the UK to raise money for the charity.

Birthday bash aboard Belfast

VETERANS and celebrants mingled on board HMS Belfast when the Town-class cruiser, now a floating Naval museum in the heart of London, marked its 70th birthday. An appeal for anyone who shared the same launch date of March 17 1938 drew responses from more than 20 imminent septuagenarians. "HMS Belfast has had a fascinating history since its launch in 1938," said Belfast's director Brad King, "but so have the people who have lived through the past seven decades. "They have seen a world war, the birth of rock'n'roll, England win the world cup and man walk on the moon. "March 17 was a great opportunity for them to get together on a ship that was 'born' on the same day as them." Veterans of the warship's long and interesting history – from Arctic convoys to D-Day, Korean War and Cold War – also gathered on board for the ship's anniversary celebrations. Now a branch of the Imperial War Museum, HMS Belfast has been preserved to record her long decades of Naval service.



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THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the April headlines of past decades...



● The first EH101 civil prototype flew alongside the first Westland-built prototype from Westland Helicopter's Yeovil site on September 30 1988

40 years ago

THE hunt was on for 'The Hunt'. Described as the RN equivalent of the Yeti, this legendary tattoo depicted a Hunt scene down the back, with horses and hounds in full cry and a fox just about to go to ground. However, although many had claimed to see the phenomenon – even discussed in Parliament – but evidence of the infamous tattoo had yet to be tracked down. Capt Ronnie Scutt, the RN's tattoo expert, put an appeal in the paper to seek this elusive individual.

30 years ago

IN an unfortunate echo of current times, *Navy News* proudly announced "Woolly pullies can go ashore". A relaxation of the uniform rules allowed officers and senior ratings to wear their 'woolly pullies' and formal uniform styles ashore. Junior rates, for whom the woolly pully was part of their working rig, were not affected by the changes. The relaxation of rules was intended to lessen the inconveniences encountered by Naval folk in their daily lives.

20 years ago

THE name for the Navy's future helicopter was announced with great fanfare – the EH101 was to be called Merlin. However it was not until March 1996 that the first production Merlin – the first of 44 ordered by the Royal Navy – rolled off the production line at GKN Westland in Yeovil. And not until December 1998 that the Merlin HM1 was officially welcomed into the Fleet Air Arm when 700M Naval Air Squadron commissioned at RNAS Culdrose.



NOTICEBOARD

Reunions

HMS Ganges 1959-60, Grenville 19 Mess, 301 Class: Seeking all members for 50 year reunion. Please contact B G Barnham, 48 Colchester Road, Bures, Suffolk, CO8 5AE or tel: 01787 228417.

MAY 2008

HMS Illustrious Association: AGM/ reunion at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, May 2-4. Contact Alf Garton on 01395 266577.

HMS Victorious 1941-45 Association: Reunion service at St Bartholomew Church, Yeovilton on May 11 at 1030 followed by Lunch. Contact Frank Short on 01981 540585.

HMS Whitesand Bay Association: Shipmates from all commissions are welcome to our next reunion (20th) which will be held at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth on May 13. For more details contact Geoff Nightingale, 268 Galley Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 3LD or tel: 01442 263405.

HMS Ambuscade Association: Mini reunion to be held at Portsmouth on May 17. The event is open to all ex-Ambuscade's from all commissions. For details contact Mark Brocklehurst at mark@sharplesgroup.com or tel: 01925 839592 (working hours) or visit the website at <http://www.ambuscade.org>

JUNE 2008

HMS Bigbury Bay Association: There will be a special church service for all those who have served onboard HMS Bigbury Bay at the church of St Lawrence, Bigbury, Devon, at 1100 June 1. The ship's bell, which is housed in the church, will be rung by the ex chairman of the Bigbury Bay Association, Roy Ashton, at the start of the service. Drinks in the Royal Oak, Bigbury after the service. Contact the secretary David Ditcher at 17 Alison Crescent, Whitfield, Kent, CT16 3LN or tel: 01304 827109.

Indefatigable Old Boys: Annual reunion and dinner will take place at the Carreg Bran Hotel, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey (01248 714224) next to the old school on June 7. For more details contact Howard Trillo by email at howardtrillo@yahoo.co.uk or Tom Keyes at tom.keyes@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 07912 693655.

RN, RM, Wrens & QARRNS: The 2008 West Australia reunion of these ex-service personnel will be held at the Rockingham Navy Club, Point Peron Road, Rockingham, Western Australia on June 7 from 1130 to 1600 hours. Enjoy 'Up Spirits', lunch and afternoon tea all inclusive for AUS\$25 per person. Cash bar and tea or coffee available all day. Spouses, partners and friends welcome. Meet an oppo and indulge in some lamp swinging with old shipmates. Contact Peter Barsch at pkbarsch@bigpond.net.au or write to 43 Baskerville Crescent, Baldivis, Western Australia, 6171, Australia.

HMS Concord Association: 14th annual reunion at the Bay View Court Hotel, Bournemouth, June 13-15. Details from Peter Lee-Hale at Pleehale@aol.com or tel: 01249 811405.

HMS Manchester Association: The seventh reunion of the Second HMS Manchester Association will take place in the WO SR & SNCOs Mess, HMS Nelson on June 21 at 1900. For details contact Steve Swaine on 07855 628255 or Ian Tidbury at iantids@ntlworld.com or visit our website for more details: www.2ndhmsmanchesterasso.org.uk or tel: 07710 282633.

HMS Kale 1942-46: The 11th reunion will take place on June 24-26 at Southdene Hotel, Bridlington. Old and new hands welcome. Enquiries to RS Clay, 31 Cuckmere Way, Brighton, BN1 8GA or tel: 01273 552076.

JULY 2008

HMS Lincoln: 1968-69 commission 6th reunion at Burford in the Cotswolds, July 19-20. Any member of the ship's company of this commission is welcome to join us. For further details contact Mike 'Yorky' Sutcliffe on hmslincoln@yahoo.co.uk or phone 01282 618751.

SEPTEMBER 2008

HMS Orion Association: Reunion September 5-6 at the Royal Fleet Club, Devonport. For details contact Kay West, secretary, at kay.west@tiscali.co.uk, tel, 0116 259 2171 or write to 28 Stretton Road, Great Glen, Leicester, LE8 9GN.

846 Squadron (1962-64): The first 'Junglies' commission of the squadron – 45th anniversary reunion, September 6 at BW-Tiverton Hotel, Tiverton, Devon. Closing date for bookings August 1. Contact Barry 'Baz' Marshall at bjmarshall@littlebridge.eclipse.co.uk or tel: 01288 381002.

HMS Figsard, Series 34, September 1958: Calling all ex-Artificer Apprentices of Series 34. A reunion to celebrate 50 years since joining HMS Figsard will take place at the Quality Hotel in Plymouth on September 12-13. It is also being combined with the annual "Green and White" dinner/dance of the Figsard Association at the New Continental Hotel, Plymouth. Full details from ex-ERA 'Bodger' Bowden at bodger@virgin.net or tel: 01271 329095 or from ex-REA Richard Owen at rao13@hotmail.co.uk. Details also on the website at <http://www.series34.info>

17th Destroyer Flotilla Association: Reunion at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth on September 17. Contact Mary Smith, 5 Ockment Court, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1SR or tel: 01837 54758.

HMS Amethyst: Reunion in Coventry on September 19-21. Contact Eric Mustoe at eric.mustoe@btinternet.com or tel: 0121 3784618.

HMS Repulse Reunion Association: Celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first commission at the Lisdoonie Hotel, Barrow in Furness on September 26-27. Open to all 'Repulsives'. For more information contact Frank Scutt at fescutt@hotmail.com or tel: 01480 393228.

HMS Crane U23/F123 (1943-62) Association: Reunion and AGM at the Nottingham Gateway Hotel on September 26-28. All enquiries to Joe Smith at crane.bird@tiscali.co.uk or Tony Nuttall on 0115 952 6363.

HMS Ocean: 21st reunion and dinner at the Savoy Hotel, Bournemouth, on September 26-28. For more details contact W Entwistle on 01282 433910.

OCTOBER 2008

Nore Command RNPTIs Association: Annual luncheon will be held in the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent on October 5, 1200 for 1300. Open to all. Contact Orlando Jemmett on 01227 263691.

HMS Daring 1952-54 Association: Reunion to be held at the Holme Lacy Hotel, Hereford, October 10-13. Details from Owen Simpson at owen553@btinternet.com or tel: 01453 860564.

HMS St Vincent Association: The 12th AGM will take place on October 11 at St Vincent College, Gosport, starting at 1100, followed by lunch. Members will be able to visit the museum. The reunion dinner will be held on the same day at Thorngate Halls, Gosport starting at 1830. For more details contact Mrs Diane Smith on 023 9258 4498. For membership enquiries contact Geoff Rose on 01329 668596 or see the website at <http://www.hmsstvincentsassoc.org>

HMS Ulster 1958-60 Commission: The 50th and final reunion will take place on October 24-27 at the Kistor hotel in Torquay, Devon. Details of cost and the weekend package can be obtained from Reg Ralph at reginald.ralph@btinternet.com tel: 01323 725978 or write to 20 Penhale Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 7JX or Norrie Millen at norriem88@hotmail.com or tel 07779 909691. Details also on website at www.candoo.com/ulsternorrie/ulster/ulster12.html

HMS Bruce Association: The AGM/ reunion will be taking place on October 27-30 at the Ambassador Hotel, Scarborough. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary D T Heath on 0121 532 4058.

NOVEMBER 2009

847 NAS HMS Simbang 1969-71: A reunion is being planned for 847 NAS HMS Simbang, Singapore, 1969-71. The reunion is open to all who served in on this squadron for these dates. The reunion will take place on November 20-22, 2009 at the Royal Court Hotel, Keresley, Coventry. More information from Cliff Jones on 01772 768104 or 01772 855846.

JANUARY 2010

HMS Figsard 1964/HMS Caledonia S50 Artificer Apprentices: Kendal, Cumbria from January 15-17, 2010. Contact Clive 'Hoss' Horsley, 18 Almond Walk, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA13 0RJ or tel: 01229 825212.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Deaths

POA(Phot) Mark Hipkin. DGMC London. Joined Photographic Branch from a stoker, and passed through RAF Cosford in 1992. Units included HMS Heron, HMS Gannet, Faslane Naval Base, CTCRM Lymington and many more, including drafts with the Standing Naval Force Atlantic and as Fleet Sea Photographer in Portsmouth – and a period with DPR(N) in London where he covered both hostile and peaceful assignments, including the evacuation of British nationals from Lebanon and the fighting between Israeli and Hezbollah forces which won him the Cameraman of the Year award at the 2007 RN Peregrine Trophy Competition. Photographic officer Lt Cdr Stuart Antrobus said: "Mark was a real giant of a man. When he came into the room it really did light up and his personality was like a rainbow. He was certainly larger than life and he will definitely always be a legend. He possessed all of the qualities that many would love to have had, and whether it was offering advice to the less experienced photographers, teaching raw recruits or helping old dinosaurs like myself, he was always there to help." February 6.

Cpl Damian 'Dee' Mulvihill, 40 Commando Royal Marines. Killed in action in Afghanistan while engaged in operations near Sangin. Joined the Royal Marines in 1998, before becoming part of 42 Cdo RM on Op Palliser and Op Silkman in Sierra Leone and Op Banner in Northern Ireland. After serving with the UK Landing Force Command Support Group at Stonehouse Barracks, he joined Alpha Company, 40 Cdo, in April 2006. Lt Col Stuart Birrell RM, CO of 40 Cdo, said: "He was a larger-than-life individual, with a personality to match, and his fellow marines took great comfort from his mere presence. As a friend he was loyal and trusted, as a comrade he was admired and emulated; a man of considerable ability, he will be sadly missed." Aged 32. February 20.

Robert 'Bob' Dack. AB. Served in Defender, Superb Field Guns crew 57. HMS Ganges and D-Boats Association. January 17. Aged 73.

Reg Knapman. Ch/Stoker. Served 1933-58. Served in WW2 on Russian convoy duties, ships included Courageous, Indefatigable, Racehorse, Apollo, Roebuck and Daring. HMS Daring (1952-54) Association. January 27. Aged 89.

Paul Wilson. WEM(R)1. Served 1990-2002 at Raleigh, Collingwood, Drake and in Defiance, Battleaxe, Norfolk and Richmond. February 15. Aged 35.

Albert 'Dave' Matthews. CMT(N). Served 1951-78 in RN Hospitals Plymouth and Chatham, ships Peregrine, Cossack, Cheviot, Neptune (Faslane), Drake, Manxman, Woodbridge Haven and Appleton. RN Medical Branch Ratings and Sick Berth Staff Association. February 6.

John Myers. CPO(OPS)(TS)(SM). Served 1964-89 at Raleigh, Dryad, St Vincent and Leander, Dolphin, submarines Resolution and Renown. January 11. Aged 61.

Ian Christie Stewart. Served during World War 2 in Dolphin, Hazard and Ganges. February 1.

Dave 'Ollie' Oldridge RM. Served 1960-70 at Lymington, Far East Station (1963-66), Centaur and RM Deal. February 1. Aged 66.

William A Dean. AM(O)1. Served 1943-46 at Royal Arthur, Gosling, Daedalus, Jackdaw (833 NAS), Shrike (836 NAS) and Gannet (893 NAS) servicing Barracuda and Swordfish aircraft. January 9.

Mick 'Kiwi' Moore. PO Naval Air Mechanic FAA. Served in Victorious (64-66), Hermes (67-69) and Ark Royal (70-72), Perth, Western Australia. February 22. Aged 61.

J Goodall. Served in first commission of Morecambe Bay in Far East and Korea. HMS Morecambe Bay Association. January.

Michael 'Paddy' Meenan. CPO FAA. Served 1964-83 in Ark Royal and Hermes, 702 NAS Heron. February 29. Aged 62.

Harold Atherton. Seaman. Served WW2 and in Teviot 1943. Awarded Military Medal. River-Class Frigate Association. January 3. Aged 84.

Alan 'Taffy' Griffiths. Seaman. Served in Plym from 1941 throughout the war. River-Class Frigate Association. February 11. Aged 86.

Bernard 'Bernie' Ebert. CPO EA latterly OEA. Served Collingwood, Fearless, Bulwark, Onyx, Revenge, Hecate and Minerva during the Falklands conflict. Joined civil service, 2002-08. March 11. Aged 60.

Maurice 'Mo' Blythe. Leading Seaman. Served in Cockade, Ulster, Comet, Hornet, MTBs and MGBs. HMS Bruce Association.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS
Capt A R E Bishop. Served: Arethusa, Onslow, Prevost, Glasgow, Excellent, Gambia and President.

Sub Lt N S Kimberley RNVR. Served: Tintagel Castle.

Cdr J G Ross. Served: Cambridge, Zest, Cavendish, Eastbourne, Excellent, Tartar and Centurion.

Rear Adm A G Watson CB. Served: Seahawk, Watson, Eagle, Salisbury, Dryad, Rooke and Relentless.

Lt Cdr R S F Webber DSC. Served: Vaceasay, Rototiti and Chieftain.

Lt Cdr C P N Wells-Cole. Served: Rodney, Excellent, Milne, Daedalus, Jamaica, Orion and Superb.

Lt David R Orchard RNVR. Joined 1942 as a Midshipman and trained at Daedalus then RNAS St Merryn before being posted to Unicorn 1943-46 then released to Reserve. HMS Unicorn Association. February 28. Aged 84.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Douglas George Stevens. Acting Yeoman. Served 1938-45 in Sheffield, Iron Duke and HQ Sparrow's Nest (Patrol Service); passed out as Signaller and served in HMTs Blackburn Rovers, Saon and Cayton Wyke including evacuation at Dunkirk. Joined Brecon on her commissioning (1942-45) serving a short time on loan to the submarine Upnor; final ship the French destroyer La Cordeliere 1945. Founder member Brecon Old Hands Association and life member of RNA; life president Hemel Hempstead branch. September 2007. Aged 88.

Gordon Friendship RM. Plymouth Division, served in Europe during WW2. Lichfield branch for over 20 years. January 6. Aged 82.

Ernie Manville. POMM. Served 1943-46 in Coastal Forces. Chairman South Harrow branch. January 23.

Frederick 'Freddie' Downer. Seaman. Served 1942-46 in Collingwood, Nigella and Birmingham. Ipswich branch. December 20.

Arthur B 'Lou' Costello. L/Seaman. Served 1936-52 in Ramilles, Sheffield, Esk-

mo, Curacao, Holderness, Triumph, Dieppe and Corunna. Thurock branch. January 31.

Frank Wade. AB Gunner. Served from 1942 in Saxifrage (Russian convoys) and Tumult (Mediterranean convoys). Newark branch. January 29. Aged 84.

Norman Pidcock. Served in many ships including Enterprise, Prinz Albert, LS Assault, Golden Hind, Newfoundland and Euryalus. HMS Newfoundland Association; Wigston and District RNA branch 24 years, branch chairman main committee and social secretary for several years. February 8.

Arthur Frederick Robinson. AB. Survivor of sinking of Delight, July 1940. Kings Lynn branch and D-Boats Association. Aged 87.

Robert D S Christie. Nuneaton branch. December. Aged 84.

Basil Williams. Nuneaton branch. February 20. Aged 84.

Ron Benton. Coastal Forces. Founder member when South Harrow Branch commissioned January 1976. February.

Ron Livy. Long-serving associate committee South Harrow branch. February. Aged 73.

Arthur 'Artie' Goodburn. WO. Joined Blake Division Figgard as an artificer apprentice 1944 and subsequently served in Vanguard, Euryalus, Childers, Amphion, Seraph, Trespasser, Aurochs, Ambush and Alliance retired 1975 as an instructor and president of the mess at Dolphin. Figgard Association, Submarines Association and founder member of Isle of Wight RNA. March 1. Aged 79.

Maurice 'Mo' Hart. Seaman. Served in King George V, Glasgow, Bellerophon and Wave. Horley branch RNA and the Royal British Legion. February 19.

Norman John 'Jack' Fisk. Seaman RNPS. Served Virginia, Wellard, Prospect, Durban, Londonderry, North Atlantic. Chairman RNPSA North London branch; RNA and Royal British Legion Gold Badge life member. February 25. Aged 84.

George Brewin. Telegraphist during WW2 serving in several shore bases and at sea in Inglis. President March branch. February 29. Aged 83.

Sgt Tom Brooker. 'A' Troop 45 Commando. Served 1943-45; at D-Day +2 Holland. Lydd and Dungeness branch. February 28. Aged 84.

Pete Downing. ME. Served 1951-63 in Indefatigable, Eagle, Maidstone, Centaur and submarines Finwhale and Tally-ho. West Bromwich branch. December 21. Aged 74.

James Cunningham. Former branch secretary and founder branch secretary of the RNA Club, Deeside.

Ernest Whitehouse. Deeside branch.

David William Stocker. CPO(ME) SCC. 20 years' service with TS Intrepid. Cheshunt branch. February 23. Aged 66.

Walter 'Wally' Alfred William Parker. Leading Seaman. Served 1943-46 in Magpie and Nelson. Pwllheli branch. January 11. Aged 82.

T H Pickett. Vice chairman Leicester branch. Normandy veteran. Aged 85.

George 'Vinny' Hughes. Associate member Harlow branch. Former merchant navy wartime survivor of armed merchantman attack (interned); also staunch supporter of the Royal British Legion. March 9.

Thomas Capewell. Harlow Branch. February.

George Catt. Harlow and also vice chairman Harlow NVA. March.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
E 'Eric' Dodd. Ch Mech. Served 1971-82 in submarines Resolution, Swiftsure and Superb. Medway Towns branch. Age 60.

D J 'Buckwheat' Harris. L/Std. Served 1947-61 in submarines Sirdar, Totem, Thorough, Telemachus, Tactician, Trespasser, Sneschal, Seascope, Anchorite and Narwhal. Plymouth branch. Age 80.

F 'Fred' Cunliffe. AB HSD. Served 1951-55 in submarines Aurochs, Taciturn, Trump and Untiring. Merseyside branch. Age 76.

D 'Donald' McGibbon. AB. Served 1953-55 in submarines Ambush and Taciturn. Essex branch. Age 75.

THE FISGARD ASSOCIATION
T J 'John' Porter. 1950 Series 10. January 5.

E W 'Ernie' Cann. 1944 Anson. January 16.

Frank Harris. 1945 Hawke. February 5.

T A 'Pinkie' Parker. 1956 Series 26. February 14.

L J 'Les' Pritchard. 1944 Anson. February 21.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Bernard Wright. Sto/Mec. Served in Coquette. January 21. Aged 78.

Lt Richard Webber RNVR. Served in Lennox, Rattlesnake and Friendship. February 12. Aged 84.

Frank Hammond. AB. Served in Hound. February 19. Aged 82.

Arthur Latham. Sto/Mec. Served in Fancy. February 23. Aged 82.

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veteransagency.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 8672
Falklands 25: 0800 169 2277 (Veterans Agency), www.falklands25.com
Royal Naval Association: 020 7352 6764, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org
RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafo.org.uk
Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veteransagency.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 8672
Falklands 25: 0800 169 2277 (Veterans Agency), www.falklands25.com
Royal Naval Association: 020 7352 6764, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org
RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafo.org.uk
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Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Operational Honours

Northern Ireland
QCVS: Cpl William David Hayes RM
Afghanistan
DSO: Capt Jaimie McCoy Norman RM
MC: Sgt Daniel Alan Fisher RM; Sgt Steven Edmond Veale RM
MiD: Mne Daniel Gad Curtis RM; Mne Kenten Luke Rademan RM; Cpl William Daniel Sewell RM; Sgt Stuart Frazer Rennie Wallace RM
Iraq
MBE: Lt (Acting Capt) Edward Varrier

Swap drafts

Logs(CS) Davidson. Draft: HMS Ark Royal. Would like to swap for: any Plymouth, Scotland, Portsmouth ship. Contact: 0783 767 1558.

POMA Darrin Alker. Draft: First Aid Training Unit, Faslane, effective start date May 13. Any reasonable offers south of Scotland considered, Portsmouth area preferred, or commutable distance from same. Contact: 93832 7078 or 7079, or by military email MWS-NBCD-PTUS1.

LS(AWW) Dahlgren. Draft: HMS Cumberland. Would like to swap for: HMS Bulwark or HMS Albion. Contact: military email 261-lsws1@a.dii.mod.uk.

PO(Sea) Read. Draft: MCTC Colchester. Will consider any draft. Contact: MCTC Colchester, Essex, CO2 9NU.

Log(Pers) Scoones. Draft: HMS Nelson, current. Would like to swap for: Yeovilton or Yeovilton NAS. Contact: 07989 817306.

AB(WJS1) Everett. Draft: HMS Chatham. Would like to swap for: any non-deploying ship asap. Contact: 07870 828298.

CPOET(WE) Marland. Draft: FOST (Devonport Sea) September into a CPOET(WE)/CWEM billet. Will consider any Portsmouth sea draft, deploying or not.

Ask Jack

Arctic Convoys - HNoMS Shika FY1664 (Armed Whaler): The children, Olwyn and Jim, of James Fox Grainger, are seeking information about their father's Naval service. James was known as Lofty or Scal and was born in Hartlepool in 1915. It is thought that he was on a few convoys, one of which was PQ9. If anyone can share any snippet of information or photographs, they would be so precious. Contact Olwyn Hart or Jim Grainger, 12 Egerton Road, Hartlepool, TS26 0BN.

HMS Ark Royal: I have in my possession a shield that was made maybe by someone who was a past member of the crew of the Ark Royal. It has the emblem of Ark Royal on the front with a message written in pencil on the back, the words are A/LEM Drury 3K3B Mess HMS Ark Royal c/o F M O Singapore. I bought it in an op shop in Australia, just wondering if it might bring back memories to a past crew member of the Ark Royal. Contact Ramon Brown at raymax@adam.com.au or write to 1 Camelia Drive, Parafield Gardens, 5107, South Australia.

D-Day: Trying to trace information about two men on a ship in June 1944 at the Normandy landings, a Scottish engineer Robbie Scott, and a Lt or Lt Cdr, called Christopher Marshall. We know the ship was torpedoed and sunk on June 8. The engineer died, believed drowned, the lieutenant survived until his mid forties but suffered from shrapnel wounds in his back and neck. Christopher was married with one child; he was decorated for his part in a night raid. We have a description of a round silver medal with star embossed and laurel or wreath round the edges; yellow and blue colours are connected to it. We have looked at the frigate Lawford, and Andora has been put forward, even Argent. It's possible that Christopher came from a small village called Haw in rural England. Contact John Brighton, 2 Westfield School, Tolpits Lane, Watford, Herts. WD1 86NP. tel: 01923 249915 or 07956 293345.

FAA Pilot: Some years ago a FAA pilot had to land his Harrier on a fishing boat off Spain/Portugal. Colin would like to know who he was and how much 'salvage money' did the fishermen get? Contact Colin Taylor, 53 Bernard House, Henry's Walk, Ilford. IG6 2NS.

HMS Faulkner: Hoping to reunite a few paintings with ancestors of the artists. My father served on HMS Faulkner during WW2 and upon his death, we found he had three paintings which had obviously been given to him during his time on board. I suspect the original artists have since passed on, but none the less, I would love to be able to pass them on to anyone with a family connection. There are two pictures drawn by a J R Channing, both from 1942, and one by a W S Kerr also from 1942. I would be happy to forward them to any proven relative. Contact Miss Sarah Lee at asurreysarah@btinternet.com or tel: 020 8397 1832.

Pusser's Pea Soup: Can someone from my distant past (or anyone else's for that matter) let me have the recipe for Pusser's Pea Soup. I really miss my fix, even more than my tot! Contact Alex Litchfield at alexlitchfield@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 812108.

HMS Jackal 1941: Jackal was asked to help defend Plymouth with her anti-aircraft guns against incoming German planes. Many of the ship's crew, who were from Plymouth, had to stand by and watch the city's destruction. After the action many of the crew wanted to go ashore and see how their families had fared, but the captain, Lord Mountbatten turned down the request and ordered them to sea. In protest the ratings slammed the doors and effectively went on strike. Later that day Mountbatten relented but when the ship arrived in Gibraltar a few weeks later, the ringleaders were flown home by the military. Whatever happened to them? Contact H Webb, 11 Northampton Lane South, Moulton, Northampton, NN3 7RJ.

Lt Cdr J H P Campbell: Seeking contact with any WW2 veterans or relatives of Lt Cdr (E) J H P Campbell DSO, Commander Aegean Raiding Operations - Southern Area (COMARO 1) from 1942-44, also CO of Port Dereman and Yedi Atala in the Gulf of Kos, Western Turkey, the advance base of the Levant Schooner Flotilla (LSF), British Special Forces (SAS, SBS) and the Greek Sacred Company (GSC) who were conducting

Argles RM; WO1 Darren James Paskins RN

QCVS: Capt Andrew Giles Goldsmith RMR; Lt Cdr Michael Anthony Goodall

National operations

QCB: Sgt Ian McDougall RM; Sgt Paul Andrew Norris RM

Non-combatant awards

OBE: Cdr Iain Galloway Breckenridge QGM: POLogs(SC) Richard Holloworth QCB: CPO(D) Robin Henry Thomas Rickard

Weapons section preferred. Contact: 93825 2311 or military email mws-itt-exp22.

AB(Logs)(CS)(D)1 seeks swap draft from deployed (until Jul 08) Portsmouth-based Hunt-class MCMV to any Portsmouth-based FF/DD or above. Contact: Lt Piper, 07717 816580 or email 300-OPS@a.dii.mod.uk.

AB1(Sea) Cole. Currently on HMS Portland, looking for a swap to any Portsmouth-based ship. Contact: 07759 267500 or military email HMS PORTLAND-ABSEA10.

AB Piper. Specialist: Chef. Draft: HMS Quorn. Will swap for: any Type 23. Contact: 07789 554171.

Assignments

Lt Col N W Bruce-Jones to Commando Training Centre Royal Marines as CO on June 16.

Lt S H Latus to HMS Ranger as CO on March 17.

Lt A O Riddett to HMS Raider as CO on March 11.

missions in the Aegean area, then occupied by the Germans. Contact Michael Lucas at mlucas34@ath.forthnet.gr or write to Mantzarou 5, Kolonaki, Athens, 106 72, Greece.

HMS Lively: Sharon Edmunds is seeking anyone who knew her father, Thomas 'Sam' Goodings from Sunderland. He was on Lively when she sank in 1942 and was called up from the reserves in 1950 to serve in Cockade in the Korean conflict. His last duty in the Navy was to escort war brides from Australia to England. Contact Sharon Edmunds, 295 Elm Drive, Risca, Gwent, NP11 6PD or tel: 01633 601090.

Strait Street, Valletta, Malta: What memories do you have of 'the Gut' or Strait Street in Malta? John Schofield is looking for tales and anecdotes of servicemen who have served in Malta. Experiences and photographs would be appreciated. Contact by email at: John.Schofield@english-heritage.org.uk or tel: 01984 623121.

RCBs: Looking for friends of my grandfather Jan 'Ken' Setters from Torquay. Jan was serving in Malta on RCB 8205, 1956-58. I am particularly interested in locating Taff Evans and Fred Woodward. Jan served on 12 ships from 1949-1971. If the name rings a bell I would be delighted to hear from you. Any info regarding the RCBs in particular would be greatly appreciated. Contact Abbie Weatherley at abbie12345@aol.com or tel: 01594 837369.

Frederick Joseph Rutland: Seeking information about the final resting place of Flying Officer Rutland. Born in Weymouth in 1886, joining the Navy in 1901 and joined HMS Audacious around 1912 and then went into the RNAS. Left the service in 1923 and headed for Japan taking a job at the Mitsubishi Aircraft Company and tasked to assist in building the Japanese Naval Air Service. He was monitored by MI5 and after the bombing of Pearl Harbor was detained in the Isle of Man. After the hostilities he was released and he retired to Snowdonia. He died in London in 1949 but details of his interment are unknown. Contact Edward McBride at EMcB@aol.com or tel: 01305 787367.

Sea Cadets: Martin is seeking information about the unit that he was a member of in the late 1960s and early 70s. At the time he lived in Mansfield near Blackburn just outside Edinburgh. He went to West Calder High School. He cannot remember the name of the unit or where it was, but remembers meeting weekly and taking part in land exercises. Contact Martin McGinty at martin.mcginity@hotmail.com or tel: 035 3963 6461.

White Ensign Association: Have you been to sea on a deployment in the last 50 years? To mark the 50th anniversary of the White Ensign Association they are producing a record of all operations and deployments by the RN over the last 50 years. If you have been to sea in an operation or an out of area group deployment you could help by providing the association brief details as follows: dates; ship/unit; operation/deployment; places; any particular event/incident; photographs. Such information will help to pinpoint deployments accurately. Please send information to White Ensign Association at office@whiteensign.co.uk or write HMS Belfast, Tooley Street, London, SE1 2JH or tel: 020 7407 8658.

ASSOCIATION OF WRENS National Reunion at York 22-24 August 2008

Friday Evening Welcome Buffet
Saturday RM Assn. Band Concert & Re-dedication
York visitor trips optional
Good accommodation on campus
Expecting over 1,000 members, why not join us?
REUNION HOTLINE 01489 505226
Not a member? Not a problem, contact 0207 9320111
wrensassoc@aol.com
www.wrens.org.uk
Serving RN Women especially welcome!

Where are you now?

Benbow 20s Division: Does anybody have a photograph of Benbow 20's Division taken in 1980? Mark is getting a bit nostalgic and his lad wants to join up now so he is trying to convince him that he was young once, too. Any information gratefully received. If you were in Benbow 20 in 1980, please get in touch. Contact Mark Scaife at scaifee@yahoo.com or tel: 07974 393121.

HMS Blake: During my service I served on Blake (1st commission), then Andrew, Aeneas, Anchorite, Oberon and Otter. I had the great delight to serve with a lad by the name of William Benjamin Oliver Daish (Mick) on three of the boats mentioned. I lost met him on or about 1980 in Portsmouth, despite my efforts I have not been able to contact him. If former contacts know of his whereabouts could they please contact me at Ronnie McAlpine, 19 Eden Drive, Gardenhall, East Kilbride, Glasgow. G57 8XZ.

HMS Blake, HMS Arun: Tex Avery is looking for anyone who served with him. Those in L/2/L. Mess, HMS Blake 1975-78 and LS Andy 'Sharky' Ward and Mick Flanagan of HMS Arun or anyone else. Contact Tex on 07770 720905.

HMS Centaur: Seeking anyone who knew the late Frank Northcott who last served in HMS Centaur 811 Squadron in 1956. He also served in RNAS Anthon 1952, Culdrose 1954 and Eglinton 1956. Contact Mrs M Northcott on 01869 244462.

Frank De Mengel: Looking for Frank who was a Killick Chef the last time we met, which was a long time ago. If anyone knows the whereabouts of Frank could the contact Roger Moore at patrog41@hotmail.com or tel: 01209 218348.

HMS Ganges and more: Chris Webb ex-CRS, would like to hear from anyone that knew him on the following ships (59-84), Ganges, Mercury,



Reservists undergo revitalised training

A SENIOR administrator, a legal adviser and a toolmaker were among the first to undergo a revitalised new entry training course for Royal Navy Reservists held at HMS Raleigh.

In the first major review for more than 20 years, changes to the two-week course have focused on developing military team-working skills and re-aligning the course with the standards expected of their full-time counterparts.

A total of 16 new recruits to the RNR, aged between 18 and 40, took part in the first course.

They were mainly drawn from the Liverpool-based RNR unit HMS Eaglet, and HMS Flying Fox, located in Bristol.

Cdre Stephen Thorne, Commodore Maritime Reserves, was the inspecting officer at the recruits' passing-out parade.

Among the successful recruits was Ross Bevan (25), from Ormskirk.

A legal adviser at Bury Magistrates Court, Ross was awarded the Captain's Prize as the trainee who achieved the best results during the course.

Ross said: "The course was hard and exceptionally tiring, but overall thoroughly enjoyable."

Senior administrator Karen Johnson (34), from Bridgwater, joined the RNR last June.

She is married to a serving RN warrant officer and belongs to HMS Flying Fox.

Karen said: "I joined the RNR to serve my country and be part of a team."

"Highlights of the course were passing the fitness tests, camping and walking on Dartmoor, and the firearms training."

The new course includes weapons-handling training and an introduction to basic firefighting.

There is closer integration with the full-time RN trainees undergoing their initial training, with both sets of trainees joining together for ship visits, orienteering exercises and a weekend under cover on Dartmoor.

Cdr Ian Pethick, RNR Initial Training Officer, said: "We are extremely pleased with how well the new course went."

"All the recruits passed the course, with some achieving 100 per cent in the final exam, and they all met the required fitness standards."

"The trainees now have a better understanding of teamwork, a greater sense of militarisation and they are much more aware of their commitments to the Naval Service in a tri-Service environment."

The RNR is some 3,250-strong, spread between 13 RNR units across the UK.

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse (Fleet Media Ops), 93832 8809 or Lt Cdr Harvey Burwin (DPR(N)), 9621 85984.



● New accommodation under construction at Culdrose

Singular scheme enters second phase

THE MOD's scheme to improve Service accommodation is about to enter its second phase.

The Defence Secretary announced in 2001 a scheme to fund improvements across the Services.

The new or modernised accommodation comprises a single room with a 4ft bed, an en-suite shower room and ample storage facilities.

Communal snack preparation and utility rooms provide shared washing machines, tumble dryers and fridges.

Rising construction costs and the MOD's financial constraints have had an impact, but Project SLAM

(Single Living Accommodation Modernisation) is being shared among the RN establishments with the aim of reducing multi-occupancy rooms except for trainees.

To date 6,600 bedspaces have been built or refurbished across the RN estate, giving some 10,000 bedspaces at Grades 1 or 2 for condition out of a total requirement of over 22,000.

A further 2,300 are scheduled to be built by March 2013, and it is hoped that in addition a further upgrade of JR accommodation at HMS Raleigh will also be achievable by 2013.

A new drive from Project SLAM

will also look at ways of bringing some of the Grade 3 and 4 for condition up to Grades 1 or 2.

The aim was to try to spread delivery so that each site had some new build. However the challenges ahead will be trying to build new and modern accommodation with the constraints of historic sites such as Dartmouth and RM Stonehouse.

The new accommodation has been welcomed by users – one individual said: "I used to have rented accommodation outside for the weekends, now I have a home here on base, I have stopped renting."

OJAR marks start of JPA appraisals

THE launch of the JPA Officers Joint Appraisal Report (OJAR) on March 31 heralded the start of the appraisal implementation process across the Naval Service.

From that date, all RN and RM officers reports are now compiled and submitted on JPA.

The JPA Appraisal Team will continue to provide guidance and support during the roll-out, but with the focus quickly turning to the first reports for sub-lieutenants and captains RM, they think it is a good time to highlight the action that needs to be taken by all officers and where to find help.

Compiling JPA OJARS

Depending on where you are serving and your access to JPA, there are three ways to compile a JPA OJAR, with the help of your nominated Appraisal Administrator, of course:

■ **JPA Online:** This is the first-choice method and should be used ashore and at sea whenever practicable;

■ **JPA Deployed Offline:** Seagoing units and some deployed units can use this option wherever it is appropriate and feasible, but the recommendation is that the online application should be used until the offline version can be proved and regularly synchronised;

■ **Non-Standard Appraisal Reports (NSAR):** If the first two options fail, NSAR templates may be used as a last resort to complete the reporting process, following the instructions in JSP 757 Chapter 11.

OJAR cells

Fleet units will continue to follow current practice and send completed reports, using the Reporting Chain, to the same regional OJAR cell as now.

But the role of these three organisations will expand and change with the roll-out of JPA Appraisal.

Responsibility for the initiation of an OJAR will pass to Unit Appraisal Administrators, while each OJAR cell will undertake the checking and approving role

for all OJARs compiled within a dedicated geographical area.

Presentations and Workshops

It is important that you are ready for JPA OJAR implementation and know what is required of you.

Hopefully, you have your copy of the tri-Service JPA Appraisal Introduction Booklet and had the opportunity to attend one of the 100 or more presentations to date.

The presentations give you an overview of a process that is applicable to everyone.

If your unit has yet to receive a presentation, don't hesitate to

contact the RN/RM JPA Appraisal Team on PNB (9380) 27465 and arrange for the team to attend.

Unit Appraisal Administrators are key people in the process, and consequently workshops are being conducted to give more in-depth guidance and hands-on practice to those holding this responsibility.

Workshops can also be arranged by contacting the JPA Appraisal Team on the number above.

Self-Service Actions

It is vital that you take ownership of your Appraisal Report and ensure that your JPA Self-Service information is up-to-date.

It is this data that will auto populate the front page of your Appraisal Report – see RNTM 52/08 for further details – and to ensure this happens, make sure you complete these sections in 'Self-Service': Employee Preferences (location, job type, career aspirations) and Personal Objectives (agreed by your line manager).

Should you need help to update your personal information via Self-Service, visit the JPA Appraisal Support website <http://royalnavy.defence.mod.uk/persdivhb/jpa/index1.htm>



● An Iraqi serviceman, his face obscured for security reasons, learns to play rugby in Umm Qasr

More than a passing fad

THE Royal Navy has a long tradition of spreading the rugby word around the globe.

And RN Senior XV Technical Analyst CPO Ash Coates is making sure that proud tradition continues today by bringing the game to Iraqi sailors.

Ash said: "When I was deployed to Iraq the prospect of developing as a rugby coach appeared unrealistic."

"Fortunately, as part of the Naval Transition Team in Umm Qasr my Terms of Reference involved mentoring the development of the Iraqi Navy and Marines."

"This included developing physical training, and provided an opportunity to introduce rugby to the Iraqi sailors and Marines."

"The top sport in Iraq is football, followed by

volleyball and basketball, so the first objective was to sell rugby as a game to the Iraqis."

"Beginning at a very basic level, the first practices were interesting and a challenge to say the least!"

"As the Iraqis spread the word to shipmates, interest and turnout gradually increased week by week."

"This was helped by showing the Rugby World Cup games as well as RN games from last season."

"They became motivated and were enthusiastic about taking the sport further."

Aims in early sessions involved getting the players to understand the basics of rugby as well as having fun.

Initial problems included impressing upon them that the ball cannot be passed forwards and that players are not allowed to bounce it.

Training school is scorching success

THICK smoke billows through the cabin as Chris Kirkpatrick directs a hose at the roaring fire on a bunk bed.

It is hot, noisy, and there is water spraying everywhere.

But within moments the lights have flicked on, the fire has disappeared and the smoke is sucked from the cabin.

Chris takes a breather from learning how to tackle a fire in a 'hot' training unit at the RN/Flagship firefighting school in Portsmouth.

We focus on Chris for one reason – he is the 100,000th student to pass through the school, which embraces facilities at HMS Excellent on Whale Island, HMS Raleigh in Cornwall and at Glasgow.

And the firefighting training team is celebrating that milestone, which has been achieved in seven years.

Chris and his 99,999 colleagues, both military and civilian, have been taught to tackle fires with confidence on board a ship, training in one of eight facilities which tower three storeys high.

Their instructors are Royal Navy and Flagship staff who are all accredited by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Designed to replicate the inside of a ship, the hot training units teach students what to do if they discover a fire and how to safely tackle a fierce blaze.

Trainees have to carefully extinguish the controlled propane flames while working their way through artificial smoke and 'challenging' environments.

PO Kirkpatrick, who was taking the advanced firefighting course, said: "The training here is very realistic."

"No expense is spared to ensure we receive the best possible learning."

"At sea there aren't any firefighters so it's our job to be as prepared as possible."

"It's a really worthwhile course, which is important, as it puts you in good stead to go back to sea."

"I trained in the old-style units too, and since then they have considerably changed."

"There is more room, it's easier to manoeuvre in the suits and you feel very safe knowing you are in a controlled environment."

Flagship Fire Fighting Training Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Flagship, along with VT Critical Services, won the £150 million private finance initiative (PFI) contract in 1999 to design, build, operate and maintain the RN's firefighting training facilities.

Although primarily for training RN personnel, the organisation also brings in money for the Navy by training civilian maritime and commercial organisations, with crews in the superyacht sector being the latest initiative.

THE RNCom community website was launched in June 2005, and with 5,000 members currently aboard it continues to grow in popularity.

RNCom was set up to support all Naval Service personnel and their families, including reservists.

It consists of two areas, an outward-facing website that can be accessed by everyone, and a members-only area.

The outward-facing site acts as an information resource, with lots of useful information about the RN. It also has an online help desk.

The members' area is an unclassified yet secure area where serving members, families and

friends can see ship and unit individual areas.

These mini websites are set up prior to a deployment with the help of dedicated RNCom community workers, who work with the ship to make sure that all of the families are informed about the site and provide a link between the ships and the families when deployed.

Eventually it is hoped that every ship or unit that deploys will have a presence on the site – there are currently 56 ships/units who have signed up to RNCom and who regularly send updates as newsletters, digital diaries or photos.

As well as information the members' area has a chat room and several discussion forums,

where families can meet up online and chat with other families of Service personnel.

Every member can access and use these discussion forums and the range of topics discussed is endless.

One of the main benefits to the Service person is that membership comes with its own RNCom Hotmail-type account that will run through the DII and has full security accreditation, which means RNCom can be accessed from desks when shore-based.

If you or your family have not yet signed up, next time you're on the web go to www.rncom.mod.uk

Defence Academy links with Institute

MILITARY personnel going through the UK Defence Academy can now gain nationally-recognised management qualifications through a new partnership with the Chartered Management Institute.

The alliance means that students on the Advanced Command Staff Course (ACSC) achieve recognition for management and leadership skills through qualifications accepted by civilian and military employers.

The affiliation will benefit up to 330 ACSC students annually. As part of the alliance, candidates on the ACSC will graduate with an Executive Diploma in Management, recognising their ability to manage performance as well as lead people and address challenges.

The partnership also gives many of the individuals the opportunity to secure the Institute's higher-level Executive Diploma in Strategic Management.

As a result of the collaboration, ACSC students will also have access to a wide range of resources designed to help develop their management and leadership skills.

Lt Col Dominic Evans, co-ordinator of ACSC, said: "The Joint Staff College strives to provide employees with development opportunities that will have mutual benefit."

"So while the management skills on the ACSC improve processes and procedures in the military, they also allow the individual to progress more quickly and confidently in their career path."

The 46-week ACSC at the Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham is designed for UK and international military officers as well as civil servants.

RN keen for uniform to be seen

INCIDENTS of abuse in Peterborough resulted in Service personnel at RAF Wittering being banned from wearing their uniform off-base – but the Royal Navy is still keen to see sailors wearing uniform ashore.

Airmen had reported being verbally abused and taunted by civilians in the nearby city, believed to be as a protest at UK involvement in the Middle East.

Strong moves have been made, championed by the National Recognition Study, to raise the profile of the Armed Forces by creating greater visibility of Service personnel in uniform.

The Naval Secretary, in support of this study, is leading on tri-Service work to define the circumstances in which uniform should be worn, is encouraged to be worn, and may or may not be worn in public.

The overall drive remains to strive for greater visibility of RN people in the public eye.

The key message from the office of the Naval Secretary is: "Whatever the outcome of the RAF Wittering issue, you are encouraged to continue the drive for higher visibility and to wear uniform in public."

Prime Minister Gordon Brown condemned the abuse, adding that personnel "should be encouraged to wear their uniform in public, they should be free to do so and the public will want to show their respect and gratitude."

Champions step up to find the answers

A TROUBLESHOOTER and a team of champions have been appointed to break the 'circle of death' which has frustrated users of the Armed Forces' pay and personnel system.

JPA – Joint Personnel Administration – had the tough job of replacing dozens of legacy systems, many of them bespoke and some on their last legs, to bring harmonisation and equality to pay, allowances and personnel practices across the three Services.

The £250 million system has been deemed an overall success by managers, and is now throwing up fewer problems than its predecessors.

There were problems with the first roll-out, with the RAF then the RN, partly because there was a decision to avoid overloading JPA with data from the existing systems.

Detailed information is becoming easier to extract, according to Col Jeremy Taylor, Assistant Director Military Services at the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA).

"Bringing all the systems together, we have one version of the truth," said Col Taylor.

"There is one single source of data, and we can identify how many people are in an area at a certain time, or how many – and who – are on a ship."

"We can track individuals – there is much greater visibility."

"There is also one set of training needed across the Services."

One problem which persists with JPA is not the hardware but the information which is being added – there is a greatly-increased responsibility on individuals to handle their own matters through the 'self-service' element.

"If the right data does not go in then we cannot crank the handle and get someone's pay in Euros in Germany, for example," said Col Taylor.

Some personnel have found themselves losing allowances once JPA went live, and this is in part down to the fact that there is less room for interpretation – JPA is "ruthless" in applying the relevant rules, according to Col Taylor.

"By and large we have sorted out most of the gremlins in the system," he said.

"Most of the problems are now down to human error or inputting error."

One example was the soldier who, as a result of a minor misdemeanour, was handed down a military fine in excess of £24 million – a clerical error by his unit meant the offender's eight-figure Service number had been entered into the field where the

fine should have gone.

This was picked up by the system, but it demonstrates how important it is to input the correct information.

Another, specific to the RN, concerns overpayment to Reservists, and in part appears to be down to multiple inputting of attendance claims in error.

But Col Taylor agreed that those who got stuck in the JPA's version of the dockyard runaround – bounced between their unit administrators and the JPA enquiry centre (JPAC) – were getting a rough deal.

Horror stories of people going without pay for months, or having allowances clawed back, hit the headlines.

Until now there was nowhere to go beyond the JPAC – with some turning to Forces publications or Internet message boards to vent their frustration.

But now Col Taylor said that two more elements had been added to the process, providing a safety net through which no one should now fall.

First is the Service Requirement Management Group (SRMG), which will act as a 'champion of the people.'

If a query or problem is getting bogged down, they will take the matter up on behalf of the individual – which will avoid the scenarios which saw combatants on the front line in Afghanistan using up precious phone-calls to sort out pay queries or placate bank managers.

The JPA system also now has an online BAG (Business Administration Guide) which means that many queries about allowances can be sorted with just four clicks of the mouse.

Primarily for the use of unit administrators and career managers, the BAG is a single source of up-to-date JPA information and advice.

And if all else fails, at the end of the line is a new JPA 'ombudsman' who will handle any formal complaints from individuals who are unhappy with the way they have been treated by JPA.

The Complaints Cell will not only deal with problems, but will be in a good position to spot trends and allow managers to tweak JPA as necessary, whether by means of training, software adjustments or information.

SPVA JPA service complaints are now dealt with by the SPVA

Pay Allowances Casework and Complaints Cell (PACCC).

If you are experiencing any JPA-related problems you must in the first instance contact your unit HR, who will either resolve the issue or advise you to contact the JPAC Enquiry Centre on freephone 0800 085 3600 (mil 94560 3600).

When you have exhausted all the avenues above, and if your issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction, then you may wish to submit a formal complaint in writing to the address below.

The following information must be included:

1 Number, rank, name and Service,

2 Your contact details (including telephone number and email address),

3 Your unit HR contact details; Service Request or I-support number(s) and dates raised,

4 A summary of your complaint with full supporting documentation.

The mail address is SPVA JPA Complaints, MP 600, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX; by email to SPVA-JPA-Complaints@spva.mod.uk; or by fax to 94561 2605 (0141 224 2605).



Moving visit for civic party

SMART suits and gold chains are perhaps not the normal rig in the Damage Repair Instructional Unit (DRIU) at HMS Excellent, but then lord mayors are not usually members of damage control parties.

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cllr Mike Blake, and Lady Mayoress Mrs Susie Sanderson paid an official visit to Whale Island, where they were given a tour of the training establishment, viewed the state gun carriage, and toured the facilities.

They were shown new accommodation blocks,

Phoenix Building and the Fire Fighting Training Unit.

The civic VIPs saw a practical demonstration on board a moving ship simulator at the DRIU (above).

Lt Greg Callis, RN Damage Control Officer, said: "The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress got to witness an element of the Sea Survival course in which damage control was carried out."

"This course encourages teamwork, which is important when dealing with incidents such as ships taking damage."

Painting depicts gallant Glowworm

TROPHY number 26066 depicts one of the most stirring actions by a Royal Navy ship in wartime – the ramming of German cruiser Admiral Hipper by destroyer HMS Glowworm on April 8 1940.

The encounter was by chance – Glowworm was part of a substantial force, but had turned back to search for a man overboard.

On spotting the Hipper, Lt Cdr Gerald Roope, the CO of Glowworm, made an unsuccessful torpedo attack.

With his ship severely damaged and little left in the weapons locker, Roope decided to use his ship as a weapon, ramming the German cruiser, as shown in the print (right) which is on the books of the RN Trophy Store.

Admiral Hipper was badly damaged by the Glowworm, putting her out of the war for several months.

Despite this her CO, Kapitän zur See Hellmuth Heye, was impressed by the British spirit and spent an hour rescuing more than 30 sailors who had survived the sinking of their destroyer, and ensuring they were well-treated.

Heye's respect for Roope's gallantry went further – he sent a message via the Red Cross recommending Roope for a decoration, and the British officer was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross – the first occasion the highest British military honour was awarded on the evidence and recommendation of the enemy.



● HMS Glowworm rams the Admiral Hipper

Have your shout on personnel matters

ARE you up to date with the latest personnel policy initiatives?

Have you heard about Project Fisher, the Key Worker Living Programme (KWLP), Post Operational Stress Management (POSM), the introduction of Recovery Cells, RN Fitness Test Reminder Cards, the replacement of the Naval Discipline Act by the Armed Forces Act 2006?

If not then you have probably not attended one of the Divisional Regimental Support Team (DRST) presentations or seen any of the Personnel Support Briefs (PSB) that are produced on a termly basis and distributed inside the cover of the 2-6 DVD.

You can also access a soft copy through the RNWeb intranet and via RNCom and Naval Families Federation websites on the Internet.

The DRST work from Fleet HQ and have been busy since their formation in December 2005 visiting approximately 200 units and establishments where RN and RM personnel are serving to bring them up to date with the latest information on personnel initiatives and more importantly receive feedback on your views on personnel matters.

Visits start with a half-hour Personnel Update presentation, followed by discussions in peer groups (officers, SRs, JRs) facilitated by a team member where you have an opportunity to express your opinions on what you like or dislike in the personnel field.

The discussion periods also provide an opportunity for the team to explain some of the detail and rationale of the initiatives being implemented.

Your feedback forms part of the evidence that is used to influence current and future personnel policy and to inform senior officers (the Navy Board, 2SL, CINCFleet, Heads of Fighting Arms) of the current perception of Naval Service personnel.

As an example of the effectiveness of such feedback, concerns regarding JPA in its early days were fed back and recognised at the highest level which resulted in the formation of the JPA Support Team to troubleshoot, providing extra training and guidance to administration staff and personnel managers as well as giving support to individuals by dealing directly with the JPAC Enquiry Centre (see main story, left).

In addition to going on the road, the Command WOs often accompany their respective head of fighting arm or other members of the Navy Board on visits to units and establishments, so look out for them – they are influential people and are always delighted to talk.

If you have any queries regarding personnel or executive issues and are not sure who to talk to then contact a member of the team – contact details are in all editions of the PSB – who will at least be able to put you in contact with the relevant person if they cannot answer the question themselves.

The DRST is also more than happy to present to family groups and hear their feedback – contact the team on 02392 625933 to arrange a visit.





Once upon a time at a base called Yeovilton...

MOST children enjoy a bedtime story with mum or dad, but that is not always possible in the world of Service children.

With parents employed on overseas detachment or living away from the family home, there is often something missing as the little ones snuggle up in bed.

But now a team based at RNAS Yeovilton have been working hard on a project that will hopefully make a difference to the children who face periods of separation from parents.

A recording studio has been available from the middle of last month enabling Service personnel to be recorded whilst telling a story with the use of a digital recorder.

The story is then downloaded to a computer and any mistakes are edited out.

Music and sound effects are added and the final story is put on to a CD.

A personal message can be included and the end product is a very professional-sounding story reading by the parent.

Children will be able to hear the voice of their parent whenever they want, and parents feel that they are doing something tangible for their children.

'Story Book Parents' can be a lifeline for families and could play a key role in helping to maintain the family unit during the period of separation.

Anyone going on deployment is encouraged to give the scheme a try.

The Yeovilton scheme is a version of the 'Story Book Dads' project that originated in Dartmoor Prison and has been in action for four years – that project is now a registered charity.

Dartmoor project managers have been supporting the Yeovilton venture and trained the HMS Heron team last month.

The fact that Yeovilton is leading the way in the Senior Service is down to Sarah Leach, who raised the issue after seeing an article about a similar Army project at Tidworth Garrison called 'Story Book Soldiers'.

The Heron version has been funded by the Annington Trust, which paid for the necessary equipment.

Big thanks are also due to Chaplaincy Team Leader Simon Beveridge, who agreed to the project team converting the sacristy room into the Story Book Parents recording studio.

Those involved in this project are community worker Tracey Hallett, Ruth David of the Education Centre, chaplain support worker David Garbett and Nicola Davidson, volunteer coordinator for the project.

Donations of surplus good-quality children's books are always gratefully received.

For more details about this project contact Tracey Hallett on 01935 841686.



● HMS Campbeltown, currently patrolling east of Suez

NETSO gain for deployed ships

THE RN, as a champion of Investors in People, is eager to get its people to invest in themselves.

So when HMS Campbeltown deployed to the Gulf last autumn, the frigate's Executive Officer, Lt Cdr Colin Williams, looked at options to help the ship's company do just that.

"We had had an Education Officer embarked with us during our earlier deployment to the Gulf who was received very well by the ship's company, and was deemed to be a very positive aspect of the trip," said Lt Cdr Williams.

"Naturally, when we were tasked to deploy again we were keen to get another Education Officer on board to provide the same service."

The request was put in, and during the first stages of the frigate's Operation Calash tour, Lt Andy Grierson, a Naval Education and Training Services Officer (NETSO), was embarked.

"As a NETSO my role is to support the work of the Education and Resettlement Officer on board front-line units such as HMS Campbeltown, and to provide a link to the services offered back in base port," said Lt Grierson.

"No two days on board are the same for me."

"I talk individually with up to ten members of the ship's company per day, who take the time out of their working day to see me."

"Together we look at ways that we can support their personal and professional development goals."

"This can vary from conducting Lantern exams [Literacy and Numeracy Testing and Education in the Royal Navy] to get people qualified for promotion, establishing GCSE courses on board, looking at the various civilian accreditation options available to personnel, arranging funding, arranging courses and, equally importantly, helping people to plan their resettlement."

"I also look to reinvigorate the educational system on board and, by running workshops on coaching, motivation and presentations, I help with the soft skills needed for divisional work."

"There's a misconception that Education Officers are only concerned with academic subjects, but some of the more interesting



● Lt Andy Grierson

courses I've been looking into recently for people on board include kite-surfing and belly-dancing.

"On HMS Campbeltown I have been very busy as everyone has their own personal goal that they'd like information on how to achieve."

"Another misconception is that deployments are not the best time to learn or study."

"In fact, deployments are a great time to do this. There are fewer distractions, people do find themselves with free time and there are lots of resources available."

"With increasing access to the Internet, help is just an email away."

"As well as the variety of people that I speak to, from the CO to the youngest sailor, I also get to visit the whole range of Devonport units, from the smaller Hydrographic units to the larger amphibious ships, submarines, frigates and satellite units."

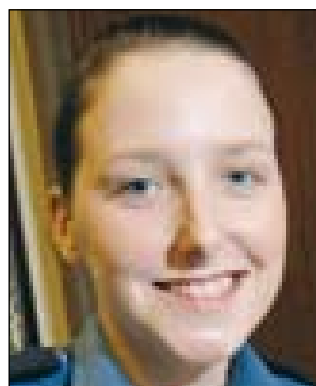
"Anywhere that there are RN personnel I am happy to go to offer my services."

Among those on board Campbeltown to have benefited from the NETSO's presence was Logs Rebecca Crowder, for whom it has opened up the prospect of advancement.

"Thanks to the NETSO I am now educationally-qualified to be promoted to leading hand – and he also helped arrange and fund a driving course for me," said Rebecca.

For AB(CIS) Amy Bennett the objective was a change of direction.

"I had been looking to branch transfer into the photographic specialisation for some time, and the NETSO was able to provide me



● Logs Rebecca Crowder

with all the appropriate information and arrange photography courses for me to study whilst I'm deployed," she said.

At the other end of his career is LS Oscar Wilde, who has almost completed 22 years in the Navy and is thinking of life outside.

"Without the advice of NETSO I would have missed out on a lot of my resettlement entitlement," he said.

"Together we have produced a plan for my resettlement that will help me in my future career."

Campbeltown's LRO, Lt Sweetman, is equally positive about the benefits of having a NETSO embarked.

"The NETSO is able to provide me with specialist advice and support that is necessary for the ship to have a well-run education department."

"He knows the ins and outs of



● LS Oscar Wilde – planning for resettlement

all of the procedures and is on top of all the latest developments.

"It is useful having a subject-matter expert to refer to when I am unsure."

Lt Grierson is part of a team of seven NETSOs, three based in Devonport, three in Portsmouth and one in Faslane.

"Over the past year we have been able to conduct over 60 visits to various units and interview over 2,000 RN personnel," said Lt Grierson.

"This demand is only set to increase as more and more ships and boats realise what services we offer and what benefits we can bring them."

"We're already getting repeat bookings as soon as we leave, sometimes up to a year in advance, as the ship wants to have us back."

That is something of which the Commanding Officer of HMS Campbeltown, Cdr Gordon Abernethy, is very much aware.

"I was very keen to have a NETSO on board for part of our deployment, just as I can understand why other units are keen to get them embarked," said Cdr Abernethy.

"They have been shown to raise the ship's morale, providing more motivated and trainable sailors, which in turn enhances operational capability."

The frigate is on a seven-month deployment which has seen her supporting Operation Calash east of Suez and combating piracy in the Red Sea before heading for the Northern Gulf in support of Operation Telic.

FOST tours US training facilities

FLAG Officer Sea Training (FOST) Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson has had a week-long whistlestop tour of key US training and experimentation commands on the east coast of America.

At the US Naval College at Annapolis, the FOST party – which also included Commodore BRNC Cdre Martin Alabaster and Deputy FOST Cdre Nick Lambert – was hosted by the Superintendent, Vice Admiral Jeffrey Fowler USN and College Commandant Capt Margaret Klein USN.

One discussion centred on the current American focus on cultural and regional awareness training for all officers, an initiative which recognises that future leaders will often need to deploy to unfamiliar regions to undertake a wider range of tasks than has previously been needed – the Expeditionary Diplomat concept.

Admiral Ibbotson then travelled to Norfolk, Virginia, for further briefings at local commands, including a call on Commander US Second Fleet, Vice Admiral Marty Chanik USN.

One key meeting was with Rear Admiral Don Quinn, Commander Strike Force Training Atlantic, who is responsible for training and certification of carrier strike groups and ships deployed independently.

Admiral Quinn said he hopes to visit the UK soon to explore his interest in deploying US surface combatants for Operational Sea Training with FOST, particularly in FOST's tailored training for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as in the force protection serials.

Admiral Ibbotson called in at the new Navy Expeditionary Combat Command at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, and visited the Tactical Training Group Atlantic (TACTRAGRULANT) facilities in Dam Neck, where he was shown a student class undertaking 'Fleet Synthetic Training' – on the agenda were opportunities for greater integration of RN ships, submarines and aircraft into US battle group synthetic training.

Options were also explored for increased collaboration in the major certification exercises which all US strike groups must successfully complete before they deploy to the Med and Indian Ocean regions in support of Op Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Active Endeavour, and in support of capacity building around the African continent.

During their visit to Second Fleet HQ the FOST team was hosted by Cdre Bob Mansergh, currently Deputy Director of Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence.

FOST was briefed on the cutting-edge work conducted on a range of key issues including allied integration with the US Maritime HQ with Maritime Operations Centre (MOC) concept which rolls out across the USN this year.

This will provide a global network of MOCs monitoring all maritime activity and providing the backbone of Maritime Domain Awareness for the Americans.

He was also briefed on development on a range of initiatives aimed at assisting NATO's Allied Command Transformation to exploit the agility which maritime forces bring to global security operations more effectively.

After an exhausting week, FOST returned to the UK armed with a very wide range of things to think about as he and his senior staff consider the way ahead for individual and collective training in the RN.

EDUCATION

The Best Start In Life



Wonderful week at West Hill Park

WEST Hill Park School in Titchfield packs a full programme of activities into their weeks.

Recently six young orators distinguished themselves when they secured first and third places in the Fareham Rotary Youth Speaks public-speaking competition.

The school has won this prestigious contest four years out of five and headmaster Edward Hudson is justifiably proud of this record.

One team of articulate 11-year-olds spoke with passion against the mollycoddling 'Nanny State' which is making their childhood so miserable. They deplored being wrapped in cottonwool and demanded the right to play conkers without having to wear goggles.

The other team gave a 15-minute presentation on The Forgotten Heroes which secured the coveted trophy. The three spoke eloquently and passionately about the plight of the Armed Forces and their unheralded return to British shores.

The whole team, self-styled 'Service brats', told of their fears for the safety of their fathers when the latter undergo stints of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.

As Edward Thicknesse said: "My father slipped back into the cycle of life without causing a single ripple." He reminded the audience that it was high time that we learned to separate our dislike of government policy from our

support of the Forces.

Popular author Robert Muchamore delivered a spirited talk to the pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7. Some of the children were lucky enough to be given a signed preview copy of his new book *The Sleepwalker*, the ninth in his successful *Cherub* series of spy novels.

Robert Muchamore spoke candidly about his life as a writer. His manner was easy and natural as he recalled the long journey to his present status as best-selling author. Since his visit the library has been bombarded with requests

for any of the *Cherub* series.

Year 5 pupils discovered dragons were alive and thriving following a visit by 'Reptile Celebrities' (pictured above). The children had the opportunity to meet Bearded Dragons, a Boa Constrictor and a Royal Python, and study the science surrounding their habitat and survival.

If you are looking for an independent coeducational preparatory school with an holistic approach to learning, West Hill Park would love to hear from you. Please contact the registrar on 01329 840400.

Harmony at Wells

WELLS is one of the oldest schools in England but has never been traditionalist and has always been enthusiastic to embrace new ideas.

In 1969 it became one of the first independent schools to become fully coeducational and even today Wells is one of the few coeducational schools that can claim to be genuinely 50/50. Similarly the staff structure reflects the school's commitment to equality.

The decision in the 1970s to incorporate the specialist music school means that Wells remains the only specialist music school to operate within the context of a conventional school. This remarkable innovation has contributed greatly to the special feel of Wells.

The Wells experience is founded on the principle that people should feel that they can be themselves, as long as this means thinking about other people first.

Significant emphasis is placed on acceptance. Wells is a community where people are accepted for who they are. For all, there is the chance to live in a world where being friends with extraordinary people is accepted as the norm. There is a refreshing sense of mutual respect between pupils whatever their talents.

The link with the Cathedral bestows upon the school an ethos where work, study and spirituality are combined in a creative mix that runs in harmony with the entire school family.

RM heads up Oratory

THE Oratory School is the only all boys' Catholic boarding and day school in the UK and educates boys of all backgrounds.

The school is housed in approximately 400 acres of beautiful Oxfordshire countryside close to the M4 and M40 with easy access to airports.

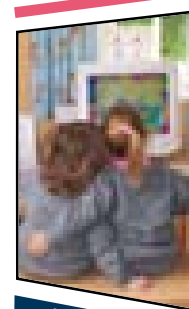
The Oratory has an international reputation for a first-class all-round education and as a school of only 400 boys, small classes and close supervision are provided.

At the heart of the school is the Christian vision of its founder, John Henry Cardinal Newman, the great 19th-Century thinker and writer. The school attracts boys locally and from all over the world both from Catholic families and other faiths.

The school motto of *cor ad cor loquitur* (heart speaking to heart) underlines the pastoral dimensions and caring community atmosphere of the school. Entry is invited at 11+, 13+ and into the Sixth Form.

The headmaster, Clive Dytor, a former Royal Marines Commando, believes that leadership skills play an important part in boys' education today. The school therefore offers a full range of extra-curricular activities including CCF, Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise, Prefect Training, and Oxbridge preparation with 99 per cent of leavers obtaining their first choice of university.

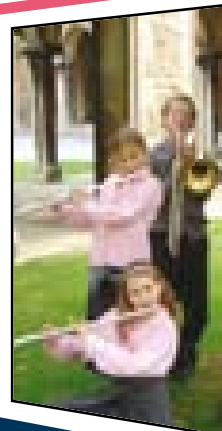
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2½ to 4



Pre-Prep
4 to 7



Prep
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WELLS

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WELLS



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For a prospectus and further information, or an appointment, please contact:

Admissions Secretary
Queen Victoria School
Dunblane
Perthshire
FK11 6YF

Tel: 01751 594 2977 Email: admissions@qvs.org.uk
Fax: 01751 594 2926 Website: www.qvs.org.uk



Apple of admiral's eye

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy.

Kelly offers a co-educational full and weekly boarding, and day education for pupils aged 11-18. It is a school of 370 students of whom half are boarders. Kelly offers all the facilities of a larger school, while retaining the advantages in the individual care and class size of a smaller school.

The Preparatory School is co-educational and has a further 200 pupils. The Prep School shares many of the facilities of the senior school including boarding from Year 5.

Kelly provides a high-quality, well-balanced education with a strong commitment to a whole range of extracurricular activities. The staff are fully involved seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

The sporting record of the school is very strong; Kelly has a national reputation in swimming, rugby and athletics, while hockey and netball teams have achieved county and regional success.

At the same time, Kelly is particularly proud of its music and drama and delighted to be taking advantage of the new Performing Arts Centre which opened in July last year.

Diary focus at Rookesbury

PIPPA Harris-Burland, headmistress at Rookesbury Park School in Wickham, writes: "In my experience one of the most important, demanding and fulfilling roles in a school is that of a form tutor... if you do the job properly!

"The role of tutor means you may be required to be: counsellor, mother, father, friend, confidante, or Devil's advocate. If a child is not happy, he will not learn – it's simple. So let's KISS and Keep It Sweetly Simple!

"In my school we have tutor periods at the beginning and end of each day. The start of the day is crucial to how the rest of the day unfolds. If you haven't done your homework, or the dog ate it, you need to tell someone.

"This is a time to ensure the children in your class have everything they need for the day ahead, from exercise books to pencils. We always keep a supply of rulers in the teacher's desk. Give them out when they are needed. Every child has the right to learn.

"The end of the day is just as important. With a little help even the most disorganised child can keep their homework diary (most important book in the school bag) in the zipped top pocket.

"I ask the children to lay out their books on their desk, before transferring them into the bag. A laminated check list stuck on the front of the desk can work wonders. Ask the child to colour it in big bold colours, so he is involved in the process.

"One of the most important sharing activities is that of setting personal targets.

"When I asked my last Year 4 tutor group what they wanted to achieve, one came up with: 'Tie my shoe laces.' Another said: 'Get my spellings right every week.'

"These are great targets, but are worthless without a measurable and specific time set.

"Establish short and long term targets. And most importantly celebrate successes, in your assemblies, with parents, in the homework diary.

"We all love to hear something good. A phone call or a quick word at the end of the day means the world to a parent.

"Above all enjoy and have fun with them."

St John's scores highly

ST JOHN'S College in Southsea has been judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted, the official body for the inspection of UK schools, following a thorough inspection of the school's boarding provision.

The report rated the popular school's boarding service as 'exceptionally high quality'. In the inspection, the Ofsted team found St John's 'provides outstanding care to the boarders it accommodates'.

Areas of particular strength identified were: 'excellent relationships between staff and pupils', 'the young people are treated with respect and warmth' and described the boarders as 'confident, polite and outgoing'.

Also praised were the 'strong leadership' of the headmaster and senior staff; the 'excellent' policies, procedures and systems; the high standard of accommodation; and the large range of activities on offer.

Headmaster of St John's College, Nigel Thorne was delighted with the report and said: "We are all very proud with the outcome of the inspection.

"We work very hard to give every child a thoroughly rewarding, exciting, challenging and safe experience. The excellent report is a fine tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone involved – staff and pupils alike."

Celebrate with Queen Victoria

ALTHOUGH Queen Victoria School in Scotland was officially opened on September 28 1909 by King Edward VII, the principles which led at the heart of the school's origins still prevail today.

To mark this occasion, QVS have numerous events planned over the year. These include:

■ Family fun day: taking place at the end of May, this fun-filled day aims to bring together all the students, parents and teachers of QVS and residents from the local community.

■ Grand Day passing out parade: this promises to be a prestigious occasion as students and teachers alike put on their ceremonial uniforms and parade in front of a very special guest (yet to be confirmed). This takes place on Friday, June 27, just before the summer break.

■ Parade Sunday: students don their ceremonial uniforms once again to mark the official opening of the school on Sunday September 28.

If you would like more information, please call 0131 310 2927 or visit www.qvs.org.uk.

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Brontë backdrop for girls at Casterton

CASTERTON School has been established for nearly 200 years and its pupils have included Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë and cookery supremo Claire MacDonald.

Casterton continues to deserve its reputation as a leading academic girls boarding school and is a Top 20 Girls Boarding School, based on percentage of A and B grades at A-level in 2007.

Intellectual rigour is at the heart of the curriculum, with intellectual character even more so.

However, as an outstanding boarding school it also provides all girls with superb opportunities for sporting, artistic and cultural development.

All girls receive an education which benefits from the 24 hour, seven days a week philosophy of a boarding school.

It is one of the very few girls boarding schools which is full boarding from 12+ and there is a full programme of events every weekend.

Specialist speakers on a whole range of topics from careers talk about law, medicine and forensic science. Other speakers discuss a range of topics from cyber safety, to studying sport in the USA and enjoying wine at the Sixth Form Wine Society.

Trips and tours throughout the UK, Europe and further afield through sports tours to Barbados and Dubai ensure that all girls leave Casterton with the qualifications, courage, strength and creativity to face the adult world of work and life, with a life-long group of friendships.

Recent successes at the end of the Easter term have included:

■ U18 tennis team are now in the Senior Girls National Finals, reaching the final eight. One of the eight is from a services family.

■ The clarinet trio has reached the final of the National Pro-Corda Competition, to be held in March. Esther-Rose Bartholomew's father is in the Navy.

■ Caroline Morphet has won the Living Edge Schools Competition at the Lowry Gallery in Manchester. Over 50 schools competed including the highly academic Manchester day schools. Caroline is from a forces family.

■ Casterton has launched its specialist coaching courses to take place in the holidays. The coaching which begins with tennis at Easter and will feature international coaches in their sport and will be both day and residential for current and prospective pupils from 8-18.

For further details please contact Emma Clark on 015242 79299.

RHS pupils take up their oars

SIX pupils at the Royal Hospital School are taking part in two team challenges raising funds for Action Medical Research.

Matthew Jones, Michael Barker, Christopher Rigge and Huw Myatt were joined by former pupil Anna Rigge in the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon, as *Navy News* went to press.

Teachers at the school and team coaches Les Thompson and Lee Munday said: "This is more than a race – it is an adventure and the young people involved have an immense amount of determination and stamina."

"Crossing the finish line will give them an enormous amount of satisfaction and raising money for such a good cause makes it all the more worthwhile."

Joined by fellow climber Daniel McRink, four of the canoeists will be taking part in the Three Peaks Challenge in July. With the support of their driver and coach, the Royal Hospital School team will



● Canoeists from the Royal Hospital School in Suffolk

ascend and descend the highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales in less than 24 hours.

Through sponsorship the teams hope to raise some £3,000 which will go towards vital research into areas such as premature birth, sickle cell disease and stroke.

Forging ahead at Duke of York's

VALLEY Forge Military Academy and College in Wayne, Pennsylvania, USA and the Duke of York's Royal Military School are delighted to announce the first fruits of their partnership.

Graham Sisson, a school prefect in his last year at the school in Dover, is to be the inaugural Duke of York's Fellow at Valley Forge. In this capacity Graham will spend a month at Valley Forge after the end of his studies in September 2008 acting as a staff instructor before going on to study politics provisionally at Exeter University.

Graham won this award in his capacity as Senior Under Officer in the Duke of York's unique ceremonial tradition, which stretches back to the foundation of the school in Chelsea in 1801 by the second son of George III, Field Marshal Frederick, Duke of York.

The school, along with its smaller sister school in Scotland, are the only schools in Britain which have the right to bear colours. Graham will preside over Grand Day in July 2008 when these colours will be trooped before an audience which has traditionally numbered royalty and leaders of the armed services.

Tony McGeorge, the President of Valley Forge and Charles Johnson, headmaster at Duke of York's, are keen to explore other links between the two institutions. Charles said: "I am conscious of the enormous shared history between our two great nations and their armed forces. We want to broaden the minds of our young people and increase their understanding of each other's nations."

CHILTON CANTELO SCHOOL

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Set in 200 acres of stunning Suffolk countryside, the Royal Hospital School is a full boarding and day school offering exceptional academic and extra-curricular provision for girls and boys aged 11-18 years.



Supporting its established national reputation for musical excellence, the School has a new £3.5m state-of-the-art music school due for completion in September 2008. Every pupil also has the opportunity to enjoy the outstanding sports facilities, including RYA sailing tuition, and to pursue a huge range of interests and activities.

Fees for families claiming MOD CEA are set so that for 2007/08 parental contribution is just £1,704

Means-tested Bursaries for eligible seafaring families

Academic, Music, Art, Sport and Sailing Scholarships are also awarded

Open Morning

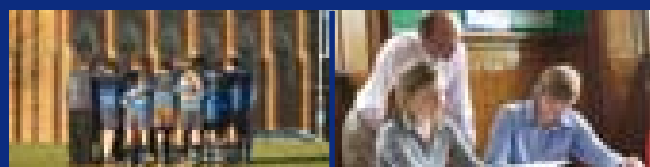
9.30am, Saturday 19th April

For further information please contact Sue Toner on 01473 326210 or admissions@royalhospitalschool.org

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www.royalhospitalschool.org

OPENING MINDS...



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Colourful Hazlegrove

SET within 200 acres of parkland in Somerset, Hazlegrove is a splash of colour in an increasingly grey and conforming world.

It is a school that delights in children being children, it encourages individuality and it values honesty, integrity and initiative.

The school aspires to, and works towards, success at all levels whether academic, sporting, musical or elsewhere, but not at the expense of balance, civility or a sense of wellbeing.

Staff believe that education should be broad and that it is as much about doing and thinking as it is about writing and remembering; attitudes and values are as important as knowledge and understanding and that the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is fundamental.

St John's School inspires in Sidmouth

WITH its well respected educational heritage, its beautiful location and impressive range of facilities, St John's School in Sidmouth certainly provides a happy and inspiring environment for its pupils.

The school caters for children from the age of two in its nursery department right up to the age of 13 in the main school. The school also offers a range of boarding options from full boarding to flexi or even weekend boarding for day pupils, which many of the children really enjoy.

With a strong tradition of Forces children in the school, St John's believes it is well positioned to offer the very best all-round boarding solution to Forces families and has recently launched a special bursary for the Forces.

Importantly, the school is very

flexible about their approach to boarding. Headmistress Angel Parry-Davies said: "We understand that Forces families have particular needs – we try to be as flexible as possible to make sure that the whole boarding experience is as positive for parents as it is for our children."

"The school's capacity of around 200 day children and an additional 70 boarders makes it large enough to offer a broad study programme yet small enough to retain the special family feel that is so valued by everyone."

She explained: "We treat each child as an individual and aim to prepare our children to face the future with confidence and self-assurance."

"I am often asked by people what it is that make St John's different. We always encourage people to visit because we think they will feel what a special place it is."

Shelter at Shebbear

TO many people a boarding school in the English countryside conjures up scenes of a bygone age: misty, dewy mornings, a place where the air is healthy and good for you, where children can climb trees, camp out and do the things that you read about in the Enid Blyton books.

Shebbear College strives to have the best of the old but add to it the very best of the present.

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Contact the Registrar at:

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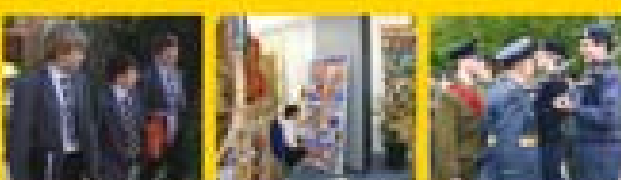
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Cranbrook has grown from poor beginning

CRANBROOK'S story is a remarkable one. It was established in 1518 as a free grammar school for the poor boys of Cranbrook, and it received a Royal Charter from Queen Elizabeth I in 1573.

It is now translated into a thriving Voluntary Aided coeducational, academic day and boarding School catering for the top 20 to 25 per cent of the ability range.

Boarding houses are in the care of resident staff with small dormitories or single study bedrooms and generous common rooms. Since boarding is on a termly basis, there are activities arranged for each weekend.

Cranbrook expects and obtains high standards of personal behaviour and self discipline. Day students live within 10km by road of the school and this produces a school with a close knit community.

The school is situated in the small Wealden market town of Cranbrook, in rural surroundings, but with the bonus of close road and rail links to major ports, airports and to London.

Specialists in Service education

THE Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) provides a high-quality service in response to any questions or concerns Service families may have about the education of their children.

CEAS is the focus for impartial advice and information regarding the education of Service children and is available to civilian partners as well as serving parents.

CEAS will respond to direct enquiries from Service families, and will also provide information to other organisations and support services that may be working with a Service family.

It has specific expertise in boarding school advice and special educational needs.

Contact CEAS for any advice relating to your children's education, telephone 01980 618244 or email enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk.

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Requests for further details and informal enquiries should be made to Professor John Chaplin (+44 (0)23 8059 2843, j.r.chaplin@soton.ac.uk).

Please visit www.jobs.soton.ac.uk and apply on-line, or call: 023 8059 2750. The closing date for this position is 14 April 2008 at 12 noon. Please quote the reference number 2133-08-E.

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Busy week on Fort Vic for Barnsley cadets



● Plenty of water was expended while training on board RFA Fort Victoria – fortunately the ship was using seawater, not fresh water

CADETS from the Barnsley unit TS Diomedé were joined by air cadets from 148 Squadron for a week-long visit to the Yorkshire town's affiliated ship, RFA Fort Victoria.

The party – 11 Sea Cadets, seven Marine Cadets and six Air Cadets, stayed on board the replenishment ship, currently berthed in Portsmouth Naval Base.

A visit was laid on to RAF Odiham, where the youngsters were lectured on sea survival equipment and saw some of the base armoury.

They sat in the cockpit of a Chinook helicopter and tried their hand at firefighting alongside the base's dedicated fire crew.

Back in Portsmouth the cadets also visited HMS Victory, the RN Museum, the Royal Marines Museum and the RN Submarine

Museum, as well as putting their skills to the test at Action Stations in the Historic Dockyard.

When things got a little competitive – such as on the Action Stations climbing wall and some of the simulators – the Marine Cadets proved they had the edge over their air cadet rivals.

On board Fort Vic the cadets received basic firefighting training and learned something of damage control.

Water was liberally sprayed around the decks – fortunately the weather was unseasonably warm – and they also received some first aid training.

An expedition was organised in the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, and highlight of the evenings' entertainment was a fashion show with costumes made from bin bags, cardboard boxes and other recyclables.



● The Barnsley cadets tried their hand at firefighting training while visiting RAF Odiham

Tributes paid to Intrepid stalwart

A POPULAR volunteer who worked hard for both the Sea Cadets and the RNA has died aged 66 after a long illness.

CPO (SCC) David Stocker devoted 20 years to the Cheshunt unit TS Intrepid, and was also a familiar figure in the Cheshunt RNA branch.

Indeed, his stoic acceptance of his illness and the amputation of a leg meant he did not lose his smile and wit, and the RNA branch recognised this by making him Shipmate of the Year and holder of the prestigious Ron Joy Trophy.

He was always a strong supporter of youth development, and was himself a keen amateur boxer in his younger days as well as singing with the Muswell Hill Operatics Society.

David's funeral was held at the Methodist Church in Hoddesdon, and TS Intrepid provided a 20-strong guard of honour.

Also in attendance were former Sea Cadets who are now serving with the Royal Navy or RFA.

Officials from the Corps included Cheshunt's Commanding Officer, CPO Sam McAdam, and the RNA branches at Cheshunt, Enfield and Edmonton were also represented.

David's wife Janet maintains the family link with both organisations, as she has secretarial roles with both the RNA and Sea Cadets.

Constant crew cut a dash at Barbers' event

THE Officer in Charge and Admin Officer of the Tooting and Balham unit were delighted to take up an invitation to attend the reception and banquet held in the Mansion House to celebrate an ancient City tradition.

The event marked the septcentenary of the admission of the first recorded Master of the Worshipful Company of Barbers in 1308, Richard le Barbour, who was asked to take responsibility for protecting the trade of barbers (which also spilled over into the trade of surgeons, hence the blood-red and bandage-white barber's pole) from charlatans and undesirables.

TS Constant provided a carpet guard of ten cadets under the charge of PPO Katie Burton – the first major event for most of them, coming through to replace older cadets who have moved on.

Most of the group – the others were LCs Smith and Bond, AC Williams, OCs Greig and Penfold, Cds Parnell, McEwan, Greig and Crozier – had a chance to talk to the VIP guests, Princess Alexandra and the Lord Mayor of London, and the unit received a number of complimentary mentions during the evening's speeches.

New units welcomed north of the border

OBAN and Wick units have passed their affiliation inspection to become the newest unit to join the Sea Cadet organisation.

Having completed its 'Colours' ceremony in front of a packed room of family,

friends and VIPs, the Oban ship's company (13 cadets and seven staff) were formally inspected by Capt Jonathan Fry, Director of Operations.

Regular classes comprising of Seamanship and 'New Entry' work books followed for the unit, together with a much-deserved

'stand easy'.

Suitably refreshed, the cadets then returned to the main deck to take part in an inter-divisional evolution – and with a prize being up for grabs the competition was lively.

The famous 'gun-run' exercise proved to be hugely entertaining, with Starboard Division, narrowly

beating Port Division to win the Divisional Challenge Shield.

At the end of the evening, Captain Fry congratulated the cadets and their staff for reaching such a high standard in such a short space of time – the unit has been operational for less than twelve months.

Oban's new name will be TS Pharos, and the unit will be affiliated to the new Northern Lighthouse Board ship of the same name.

The unit was parented through its 'embryonic' stage by Lochaber unit, which sent cadets down to attend Oban's enrolment evening when the first recruits were taken on board – ten signed up as a result.

At the time Oban's Officer in Charge, S/Lt Ewan McCuish, said of the unit's first parade night: "It will be the first Sea Cadet night in 45 years."

Derrick Warner, CO of the Lochaber Unit, said: "Coming from a town with a strong maritime heritage, Oban has a strong committee and an excellent team of staff – they have the potential to be a very strong unit."

"They already have a motor boat and access to a number of dinghies at the local yacht club."

It is hoped that a close partnership between the two units will develop over time.

Wick Sea Cadet Unit was set up as an embryo unit early in 2006 and has been going from strength to strength ever since.

The unit staged its formal affiliation inspection in February for Capt Fry, who said: "I shall have no hesitation in recommending to the Trustees that TS Campbell be accepted into the Sea Cadets."

TS Campbell meets for parade nights on Tuesday evenings at the Boys Brigade Hall, Henrietta St, Wick.

Anyone interested in joining, or being an adult officer or helper, would be welcome and should go along to one of the weekly meetings to find out more details.



● Coventry cadets see the workings of HMS Portland's operations room

Sea time for Coventry

CADETS from the Coventry unit spent a day at sea training alongside the Royal Navy.

The 14 cadets, accompanied by three members of staff, travelled to Weymouth, where they stayed overnight at the Sea Cadet Training Centre.

They then joined Type 23 frigate HMS Portland, which was visiting her namesake town after a busy deployment to the Caribbean last year.

The cadets' visit was part of a Naval insight course arranged by the Coventry Royal Naval Careers Centre.

Once on board the cadets spent a day with their Royal Navy counterparts getting to see the various departments onboard a working warship.

They spent time on the bridge, in the operations

room, engineering and warfare sections.

Both cadets and staff had "an amazing time", and are all hoping to spend further time with the Royal Navy in the near future.

Lt Steve Warwick, the Commanding Officer, said: "We

thank the Coventry Royal Navy Careers Centre for arranging such a great visit.

"All of the cadets had a fantastic time discovering what it is like to live and work onboard a warship.

"They are all looking forward to future visits".

Guests share in Amazon's triumph

THE Commanding Officer and crewmen of HMS Triumph gave cadets at the Hinckley unit an insight into life on board a nuclear submarine.

Cdr Eric Sykes inspected the ship's company of TS Amazon, including a guard of honour, and chatted to the cadets.

He then spent the evening touring classes to see the type of activities undertaken, including seamanship, practical leadership tests, marine cadets training and – in the junior section – the making of Mother's Day cards (at which the cox'n of HMS Triumph proved

a dab hand).

At the end of the evening Cdr Sykes presented POC Jonathon Booker with the unit's burgee efficiency award for 2007, congratulating all the cadets for their achievement in securing the burgee for the fourth year running.

Lt (SCC) Neil Hartwell RNR, the CO of Hinckley, said it was a great honour for the unit that Cdr Sykes and his crew had attended to present the burgee, and he hoped that members of HMS Triumph would now be regular visitors.

Rewards for high achievers

OUTSTANDING achievements by Sea Cadets have been recognised at a ceremony at Goldsmiths' Hall in London.

The Jack Petchey Foundation, the London and Essex grant-making trust benefiting young people between the ages of 11 and 25, honoured more than 70 cadets with Achievement Awards.

Each winner was presented with a medallion to accompany a framed certificate and cheque for £300, which is to be used on a project or equipment of the winner's choice within the Sea Cadets.

In total more than £33,000 was given to the Corps by the Foundation through these awards.

The medallions were presented by Capt Jonathan Fry, the Captain of the Sea Cadets, who said: "I am delighted to be able to take the time to recognise the achievements and contribution of these young cadets."

"Each of them has set a tremendous example for their peers through their hard work and commitment, and it is a credit to their families and the Sea Cadets."

"This is the first time that the Jack Petchey Foundation has presented Achievement Awards to our cadets."

"It is outstanding that an organisation such as this takes the time to highlight the good that our young people do, and long may this work continue."

Chris Bullock, Foundation Grants Officer for East London, said: "The Sea Cadets are a fantastic organisation and the Jack Petchey Foundation is delighted to be able to recognise the achievements of some of their young people for the first time with such a grand ceremony."

"The cadets receiving awards have each demonstrated a tremendous willingness to contribute in addition to their outstanding achievement."

"It is a true mark of this contribution that their peers have nominated them for these awards, and hopefully they will continue to serve as an inspiration to other cadets seeking to follow their example."

Unit presented with 2007 burgee

STEVENAGE unit has been formally presented its burgee in recognition of the high standards maintained in 2007.

Michael Burn of John Lewis was the reviewing officer, and the evening gave cadets a chance to demonstrate the skills they have picked up at the unit.

CO Lt Margaret Coates said: "It is an honour for the unit to receive this award and is a fair reflection on the hard work of the staff and cadets over the last year."

A number of Stevenage cadets have been invited to join the massed band which will play at the RN v Army rugby match at Twickenham in May.

Pupils band together to raise funds for charity

CADETS from Lincolnshire have been raising funds for – and raising the profile of – Servicemen and women deployed in the war zones of the world.

A number of RN cadets at Stamford Endowed Schools CCF, along with a member of staff who served with the Scots Guards during the Falklands, created wristbands to raise cash for SSAFA and Combat Stress.

More than 2,000 bands have already been sold, contributing to the coffers of these Service charities.

But their creators also wanted to use them to increase awareness, and with a little help from some high-profile names, that is exactly what is being achieved.

A band was seen on the wrist of England captain Paul Collingwood during the Test matches and one-day internationals series in England, and the RAF Red Arrows lined up for the camera in front of their aircraft to publicise the campaign.

Bands have been ordered in the United States, Canada, Australia and Brunei, and Richard Brewster, from the school's CCF, said that they hope their small campaign will show that people do care about the troops in the front line, and show the troops that people back in the UK are thinking about them.

The RN section of the CCF is affiliated to HMS Nottingham, whose latest patrol has taken her to the South Atlantic.

Eastbourne and Gateshead close to prize

SEA Cadet units finished second and third in this year's St Dunstan's 'Go the Distance' challenge.

An Air Training Corps squadron from Jersey took top spot, just pipping the Eastbourne and Gateshead units to the honours.

Cadets and adult instructors from all three units are due to visit the National Training Centre in Ovingdean, near Brighton, this month, where they will receive their trophies from writer and broadcaster Peter Snow.

Also attending will be the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, Lt Gen Andrew Ridgway.

The competition challenges cadets to cover the distance of a half marathon – 13.1 miles – in an imaginative and innovative way.

Jersey used a land/sea/air approach by walking, kayaking and flying; TS Eastbourne restored an old field gun and pulled it along the prom in their home town, and TS Flamingo pulled their boats up the River Tyne for the required distance.



● Work starts on the frame which will be used in the process to create the hull of the TS Jack Petchey

Work starts on new cadet training ship

THE contract for the new Marine Society and Sea Cadets training ship has been awarded to the Bridgend Boat Company Ltd of Plymouth.

TS Jack Petchey will take some two years to build, and the contract is for £2.5 million.

The Marine Society and Sea Cadets launched an appeal to build a 24-metre powered training craft in 2006 during the charity's 250th anniversary.

The target was reached in just over a year, thanks in no small part to a £1 million donation from the Jack Petchey Foundation.

And despite bids from yards around the world, it was a British company which came up trumps.

Work has already started on the initial frame construction, from which the yard will build the plug to create the hull.

Similar in design to the Corps' existing power training vessel, TS John Jerwood, the new ship will allow much more sea time for cadets on six-day voyages at sea.

Over her anticipated 25-year lifespan the TS Jack



● How the TS Jack Petchey will look

Picture: Houlder Ltd

Petchey will be home to around 16,000 people and 3,000 adult volunteers, and she will act as a platform for learning skills such as engineering, electronic communication and chart systems, cooking and stewarding, the need to be vigilant and keep watch, the value of living in a tidy and disciplined environment, and the need to employ sound social

and communication skills when working in a team.

Mike Cornish, chief executive of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, said: "We are delighted to have been able to award the contract for the TS Jack Petchey to a British shipyard as it contributes in a small way to ensuring those technical and boatbuilding skills for which Britain as a seafaring

nation can rightly be proud are kept alive."

Bridgend director Peter Humphrey said: "It's a large contract and will give the company a lot of stability."

TS Jack Petchey is expected to enter service in early 2010.

She will be based at the RN Reserve Training Centre at HMS President, close to Tower Bridge.

Corps supports Jersey inquiries

THE following statement has been issued by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), the parent charity of the Sea Cadet Corps, regarding police investigations in Jersey:

"In relation to the ongoing enquiry into a number of allegations of historical sexual and physical abuse of children on the island, the States of Jersey Police have been investigating a number of individuals, some of whom had previously been connected with Jersey Sea Cadet unit."

"Both the current personnel at the Sea Cadet unit and the trustees of the parent charity, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), in the UK have been fully supporting the investigation for some months and will continue to do so."

"The police have informed the MSSC that any connection to the unit is now playing a very minor part in the investigation."

"Assurances have also been received from the officer leading the investigation that there is no connection between the Sea Cadets and the current enquiries centred on Haut de la Garenne care home, which closed in 1987."

"Jersey Sea Cadet unit is a volunteer-led youth charity."

"The Marine Society and Sea Cadets takes its duty of care towards its young people very seriously and inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated."

"Procedures are regularly reviewed and robust child protection policies and processes are in place."

"All adult volunteers in the organisation are required to undergo a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) Disclosure before having unsupervised access to cadets."

"It is important to emphasise that the police enquiries are of an historical nature and relate to individuals rather than activities at the Sea Cadet unit."

"Safe training is continuing to take place very successfully under the current management at the unit, which is thriving and has recently been presented with a number of national and Area trophies."

Praise for TS Laforey

AN East Anglian unit has won praise at its biannual inspection for its all-round efforts.

Northampton and Wellingborough was described by Inspecting Officer Cdr Clive Smith as "literally bursting at the seams with cadets, and the dedicated supporters and staff work harmoniously to ensure the young people of Northampton and Wellingborough experience the very best of what the Sea Cadets has to offer."

Flipside of annual review



● Junior cadets from Hornchurch and Upminster display their decorated pancakes – alongside that of London Area Officer Cdr Paul Haines (on table)

THE new Area Officer for London, Cdr Paul Haines, visited the Hornchurch and Upminster Unit to carry out the units' Annual Review.

Cdr Haines was escorted by Acting CPO (SCC) Sarah Butcher, the new Officer in Charge of the unit – Sarah took over at the beginning of the year from Lt Cdr (SCC) Michael Chittock RNR, who has moved on to be Assistant District Officer for Essex District.

The commander was shown the various cadet classes taking place and saw cadets at work on their different subjects.

He was also given a comprehensive tour of the unit and its surrounding areas.

Cdr Haines was suitably impressed with what he saw, which further endorsed the unit as the 2007 winners of the Stephenson Trophy for the best unit within London Area.

Being Shrove Tuesday the Junior Cadets were busy decorating pancakes.

On the night the commander joined in the fun and decorated his own pancake.

A tale of two Bulwarks

AFTER years of following HMS Bulwark from design through to service, her namesake unit visited her for the first time while the ship was in Liverpool.

Suitable awed by the assault ship's size, the Buxton cadets were met by S/Lts Tom Horne and Jack

Bright, who took them on a guided tour from the cavernous dock through the ops room – which is bigger than TS Bulwark's main deck – to the bridge.

There was also a chance to examine the Goalkeeper point defence system before the cadets headed home.



Don't fear the Reeperbahn

AS SAILORS go, if not unique then David Franklin is in pretty rare company.

A Jewish emigré who fled Nazi persecution, his career was eclectic to say the least: clothing salesman, sailor, diver, photographer, importer, businessman, journalist.

A decade ago, the former sailor drew on his Service experiences – and a brief spell as a fashion photographer – to write a novel set in Malta.

Now he has put pen to paper again to encapsulate his life in **Dave's Tales** (Book Guild, £14.99 ISBN 978-1-84624-193-2), a mix of memoir and anecdotes... so the title's quite apt.

The heart of the book is devoted to the author's naval career, painting an image of an almost halcyon age of life for the lower decks in the early post-war era.

Yes, there are hoary chiefs and petty officers bellowing at the lads, but there are also kindly senior ratings too.

And there are runs ashore. Lots of runs ashore.

Shipmates may have been a bit wary of Franklin initially – "e speaks foreign," one bluntly put it – but 'speaking foreign' proved rather useful in Hamburg.

The Hanseatic port had a legendary – or infamous – reputation in the 50s and 60s.

The sailors guzzled the less-than-tastefully named wine *Kraner Nacktarsch* (Kraner's naked arse) then headed off to St Pauli's, Hamburg's red-light district to the *Große Freiheit* (Great freedom) nightclub. "The blurb said it was the 'heart of St Pauli'," writes the author, "I would have thought it was a bit lower down."

Booze and sexual liberation are a common theme in Franklin's memoirs – and the tour of northern Europe in the early 50s with three minehunters was liberally peppered with both. (This is definitely a book for the broad-minded.)

Copenhagen proved to be almost as debauched as Hamburg. There was copious

booze (again) provided by the good folk of Carlsberg and copious amounts of pornography; the Danes seemed to be ahead of the game when it came to pictures of naked men and women... pictures which promptly did the rounds in the mess decks.

All this will no doubt bring back fond memories (ones probably best not repeatable to the 'other half') for many National Servicemen and post-war matelots, as it's a good romp.

But there's a poignant, rather touching side to *Dave's Tales* too: his life before moving to Britain.

David Fraenkel, as he was then, was born in Berlin in 1924 to a Jewish family. His father served the Fatherland with distinction in the Great War – at dinner parties at the Fraenkel home he proudly displayed six Iron Crosses, earned for bravery in the line of fire.

That did not stop the Gestapo whisking him away one day in 1936 – an action which spurred the Fraenkels to emigrate to England the following year.

Yet England did not always look kindly upon the influx of asylum seekers and emigrés from the Third Reich.

With invasion threatening Britain in 1940, David Fraenkel was branded an 'enemy alien', faced a curfew between the hours of midnight and 6am, and almost faced losing his bicycle.

He kept it thanks to the intervention of his kindly headmaster.

"I cannot imagine that any harm to this country would be caused by Fraenkel having a cycle while at school," the teacher successfully pleaded.

He was right.

David Fraenkel became David Franklin and served his adopted country.

Perhaps he was destined to go to sea: his first memory is wearing navy shorts, a navy jacket and navy cap in front of a Berlin café aged three.

The tally on the cap, however, read *Kriegsmarine*, not HMS...

● A contemporary – and not especially accurate – illustration of Danish prisoners of war held in a prison hulk at Chatham



The incarceration game

CLIVE Lloyd's remarkable book of over 380 large-format pages, densely packed with readable prose and fine illustrations – **A History of Napoleonic and American Prisoners of War, 1756-1816: Hulk, Depot and Parole** (Antique Collectors' Club, £35 ISBN 978-1851495283) – is the result of the author's passionate interest of over 50 years.

After serving in the Navy in World War 2, Clive Lloyd returned to civilian life as a designer, and also opened a gallery of marine paintings, writes Roger Knight, *Professor of Naval History at the University of Greenwich*.

In the 1950s he found a bone prisoner-of-war model in the Portobello Road market and thereafter he was hooked.

He formed a remarkable collection of prints, paintings and printed journals relating to those prisoners in England and it was collecting that drove this history from the opening of the Seven Years War in 1756 until Napoleon was finally defeated in 1815.

Lloyd writes this very much from the point of view of the

prisoners, detailing the way in which prisoner society evolved, some rich prisoners ('*Les Lords*'), and some who lost all through gambling ('*Les Romans*' or '*Les Miserables*'), picking over offal heaps for food.

Although food and monetary support were provided by the British, clothes were the responsibility of the home nation, and the authorities allowed both internal markets and clothes to be sold to the British public.

Relations between prisoners and British officials varied widely between locations. There were many conventions now not known to us, with officer's eligible for parole, free to roam within agreed limits and socialise in many English towns.

Lloyd has scoured the literature of France, Denmark and America for published reminiscences, particularly of escapes.

Perhaps the most charming concerns 30 French soldiers involved in the bungled landing at Fishguard in 1797, when they surrendered to local forces commanded by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Cawdor.

They showed more initiative in getting home than they had in achieving their military objective.

Aided by two Welsh women, both in love with Frenchmen, they made away with Lord Cawdor's yacht to France. During the brief Peace of Amiens one of the couples returned to open a pub in Methyr Tydfil, only to beat a retreat back to France when war was once declared again.

It is, however, the war against Napoleon when the story becomes fascinating, by which time the number of French, Danish and American prisoners grew to over 122,000 at its peak.

By this time the hulks at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham were overcrowded and often diseased, though conditions were better ashore at Portchester Castle, Forton and Mill Bay.

There were other depots at Bristol and Liverpool. Norman Cross, on the Great North Road, was built of wood in four months, and eventually contained six thousand prisoners. The depots spread up to Edinburgh Castle, at Penicuik and Perth. Dartmoor, finished in 1809, described by the Governor as "an overcrowded city without women," was a lethal place, and 1,198 prisoners were to die there.

The situation got worse after

the peace preliminaries had been signed in 1814, with frustrated prisoners still behind bars.

As late as April 1815 the Somerset Militia lost control of angry American prisoners at Dartmoor, resulting in a riot and the deaths of 63 prisoners, in what became known as the Dartmoor Massacre. Over 5,000 Americans were eventually sent home. Of all nationalities, over 10,000 prisoners died between 1803 and 1814.

If you are looking for tightly-argued historical logic, tables of statistics, appendices of government costs, lists of the great civilian works which were carried out by the prisoners, you will be disappointed.

Overall judgements and conclusions are missing; nor, sadly, is the book anything more than scantily referenced, but this lack of finish may have been the result of the author's death in 2004.

What you have is a book packed with interest and anecdote, of tales of cruelty and early death, of bravery and loyalty, of the proud traditions of families today descended from prisoners who stayed in England and Scotland and married.

But above all, this book shows the underside of a conflict in which nations were fighting for survival, and nobody, after reading this book, will think that things are any worse today than they were two hundred years ago.

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'Let this be a lesson to you...'

SHORTLY after daybreak on Tuesday July 4 1944, the minesweeping trawler HMS Hoxa spied a dinghy in the Indian Ocean some 700 miles south of Ceylon.

Seven men clung to it. Another 16 hung on to rafts and wreckage of the liberty ship Jean Nicolet. Of the 100 men who had sailed the merchant vessel, they were all who survived her attack by the submarine I8.

The horrors of escaping a sinking ship, of spending 36 hours in the Indian Ocean with no food or water, with sharks picking off the dead and living, paled when RN intelligence officer Lt Cdr L A Steward questioned the survivors.

Seward knew of I8's reputation – and especially that of her captain, Cdr Tatsunosuka Ariizumi, a man already dubbed 'The Butcher' by naval intelligence.

Even by his standards, however, The Butcher had excelled himself on the night of July 2.

The crew of the Jean Nicolet abandoned ship and took to their boats after two torpedoes crashed into the vessel.

As the lifeboats rolled and rocked in the ocean, I8 surfaced. Her crew lined her deck. A voice in English urged the survivors to swim to the safety of the submarine.

A 17-year-old steward was the first to take up their offer. He was beaten with a pipe before a submariner emptied a revolver into his head and kicked his body over the side. A second man was bayoneted before his skull was smashed in with a rifle butt.

The atrocities did not end there. Ariizumi set about rounding up the lifeboats and boats. The survivors were frogmarched on to I8's hull, robbed of most worldly goods, beaten, slapped, their hands bound behind their backs.

"Let this be a lesson to you that Americans are weak," Ariizumi snarled. "You must realise that Japan will rule the world."

To demonstrate Japanese mastery, the submariners then formed two lines on the aft deck of I8 and forced the prisoners to 'run the gauntlet'.

As the unfortunate Americans struggled between the lines they were bitten by bars and butts, slashed at with knives or bruised by pieces of chain.

And at the very end of the gauntlet stood a large submariner with rifle and bayonet, ready to put the prisoner out of his misery and pitchfork him over the side.

Of 60 men forced to run the gauntlet, only three survived. The remaining 30 or so survivors were spared only by the approach of an Allied aircraft which forced I8 to dive.

The prisoners were left on deck as the submarine vanished beneath them. It would a good 30 hours before Hoxa found them.

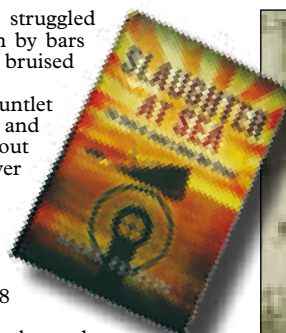
Books on the fate of Allied prisoners at the hands of their Japanese captors are legion.

Cruelty, however, was not solely the preserve of the Japanese soldier, as Dr Mark Felton demonstrates in **Slaughter at Sea: The Story of Japan's Naval War Crimes** (Pen & Sword, £19.99 ISBN 978-184415-6474) and the Jean Nicolet was far from an isolated incident.

The author has plundered archives around the world as well as printed books and newspapers to remind us that the Imperial Japanese Navy was every bit as complicit in atrocities as the Army was.

It wasn't merely crimes at sea with which they bloodied their hands. Like Nazi doctors, IJN surgeons carried out repeated medical 'experiments' – needless amputations, needless dissections – before the poor victims were strangled with rope and their bodies buried in unmarked graves.

This is a very dark story – and one worth remembering. For while in the aftermath of World War 2 stories of atrocities abounded – and justice caught up with some of



● Shame and dishonour... Japanese prisoners with bowed heads after hearing Hirohito announce his nation's unconditional surrender Picture: US National Archives

the perpetrators at various war crimes trials – six decades on, these crimes at sea are at best overlooked and forgotten, at worst denied.

It would be nice to report that justice caught up with the perpetrators. It did not in many cases: 137 naval officers were tried and 129 convicted of war crimes.

Tatsunosuka Ariizumi was not among them. Rather than surrender, Ariizumi shot himself in his cabin. His comrades wrapped his body in the Imperial flag and tossed it into the ocean, a death becoming a hero...



● **Hooperstar... ET(ME) Justin Campbell scores during the demolition of the Winchester Wizards**

Warming up for the big ones

MORALE-boosting results at HMS Collingwood saw both senior and junior RN basketball sides provide more evidence of growing confidence which can only be achieved through victories against quality opposition.

Following a three-hour 'blowing off of the cobwebs' session on Friday night, an early Saturday morning match against Winchester Wizards saw the RNMBA side struggle initially to get into their stride, *writes Cdr Rob Knill, chairman RN Basketball.*

When they did, however, they produced some of the most fluent basketball seen in recent years, eventually rolling out 84-46 winners.

LET(ME) Blair Charles, and ET(ME)'s Myron and Justin Campbell (all HMS Sultan) and Mne James Woodcock (RN Poole) were all on song.

The return of Mne Mike Stubbs (CTCRM) and discovery of Mne 'Oz' L'Abbatte (FPGRM) also showed increased depth in the playmaking area.

The development squad then snuck a narrow win against a well-established Portsmouth Command team (57-55) before going almost as narrowly in a follow-on fixture against Winchester, 59-62.

LMEA 'Jack' Paxton (HMS Kent) and Mne Dale Solf (Cdo Logs Regt) made significant contributions, as did ET(ME) Ben Whitaker.

A further two hard-fought games on Sunday saw the development squad lose a highly-charged encounter with Whiteleigh Wolves by just three points (64-67) and the seniors – now wilting as a result of such an intense series of matches – go down 80-89 to a highly talented Solent Smugglers national league Div 4 outfit.

Overall, it was a hugely beneficial 'workout weekend'.

The squad now moves to HMS Drake for pre-Inter Service training camp (April 6-12) and the Inter Services tournament proper at Grantham (April 18-20) with much of the blood, sweat and tears already behind them this year.

More details from Cdr Knill on 94391 7641.

Closing the gap

The row to glory

TEMERAIRE was the venue for the 2008 Inter Services squash championships, *writes Lt Cdr David Cooke, secretary RNSRA.*

Preceding the Championships, an inaugural Combined Services U25 fixture had been arranged by Sgt 'Westy' West RM (RN squash U25 manager) against Portsmouth Grammar School.

Although the pick of the Services U25 players were involved, they were no match for a PGS side that bore little resemblance to grammar school boys. The result, a 0-6 defeat, was a foregone conclusion.

On the first day, the RN U25s opened proceedings with their match against the RAF but without their number one string OM Richard Rowley (HMS Middleton).

In his place, AET Stephen Wallace (Sultan) played very well against a tough opponent, but a lack of match fitness proved too much for the Navy player who had to concede defeat after an 8-10 result in the third game.

Mne Martin Sadler (42 Cdo RM) at number two won comfortably, but the remainder of the team each went down 0-3.

The RN veterans playing against an ever-youthful Army veterans team never got a look in, except Lt Cdr Robin Young (Nelson) playing in an unfamiliar number two slot, who disposed of his opponent in three straight games.

A strong RN senior team looked to stand more chance of an upset this year than for a number of years and when the Navy champion Capt Damien May RM (771 NAS) beat his RAF opposite number – the current Combined Services individual runner-up – an upset really was on the cards.

Lt Jules Crew (815 NAS) narrowly failed to beat his opponent in five games and Lt Matt Ellicott (HMS Westminster) and POAEA Neil Martin (815 NAS) both had good tussles in four games, but without success.

The RN Ladies fielded the



● **42 Cdo's Mne Martin Sadler (foreground) and AET Stephen Wallace (Sultan), RN U25 squad members, warming up for their clash with the Army at Temeraire**

Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams

strongest team possible too, yet were no match for an experienced Army side who brushed the dark blues aside apart from Cdr Fiona Fawcett (Beaconsfield) who pulled a leg muscle early in her match but still managed to extend her opponent to five games.

On the second day, all four RN teams were in action. In the U25 section, Wallace took his Army opponent and current CS individual under 25 champion, to five games, but match fitness was again his undoing.

The remainder of the U25s never got a look in and were eventually defeated 0-5.

A slightly re-arranged RN

veterans side were next on against last year's champions, the RAF, and encountered a very confident Air Force team that included a player recently moved up from their senior squad.

The Navy were no match and were beaten comfortably 0-5, no RN player ever seriously threatening.

Because of unavailability and the previous day's injury to Fawcett, the RN ladies were always on the back foot and were outclassed by the RAF ladies, who fielded a team that looked very similar to the one that won the title in 2007.

The final section of the day brought on the eagerly awaited

arrival of the Army number one and ex-world ranker, to play against Navy number one Damien May.

Although May had lost convincingly in 2007 he was in a buoyant and confident mood.

May won the first game and, to the surprise of many, the second too, but he lost the next two and the score was even.

Half way through the final game both were level on points and a major upset was certainly possible, but for all May's best efforts he was unable to match the skill of his opponent and finally succumbed 2-3.

Three of the other RN senior players took their Army counterparts to four games, with Crew winning his encounter 3-1.

The final morning started with the RAF vs Army U25 contest, which provided five game encounters in four of the matches.

Although all four matches were very close, the Army finally came out on top and took the trophy 4-1.

Next on court was the veterans' final, where once again the RAF were too strong for the Army and edged home 3-2.

In the ladies' competition there was a repeat of the 2007 final where the RAF, current champions, once again managed to fend off the Army to take the title 4-1.

The final series of matches brought together the Army and RAF seniors, with the result in the balance throughout the match.

The Army won at numbers one and three, the RAF had matches four and five in the bag and all hinged on the outcome of the number two seeds, which was eventually won by Capt G Clarke (Army), ensuring victory for the soldiers 3-2.

Over the three days, there was much top quality squash in evidence and although the Senior Service did not come away with any trophies, scores and results in many matches did not reflect just how much the RN players have closed the gap on the other two Services.

Tour launches crucial year

THE Navy's cricket team staged a season-shaping tour of South Africa's cricketing heartland ahead of their biggest year on record.

2008 will see the centenary Army vs RN match at Lords, the razzle and dazzle of the Inter Services Twenty20 tournament and the campaign to regain the Inter Services trophy which the sailors last lifted in 2000, *writes Lt Andrew Ainsley, HMS Severn.*

The team last visited South Africa in 1997, not long after the end of apartheid, and in the interim they have also toured India (2000), Australia (2001) and a rain-soaked Barbados in 2004.

For the small group of 13 players this was to be a tough challenge with seven games in 11 days as well as coming to grips with the peculiarities of touring for a relatively inexperienced party.

Training had been on-going since November but nobody could predict just how the small group of players would fare in the scorching heat of one of the world's most forward-looking cricketing nations.

The tour opener against the South African Navy did not prove to be the test that had been expected and the opening partnership of Sgt Shaun Needham (Cdo Logs) (86) and debutant ET Harry Young (MWS) put the opposition bowling to the sword with RN captain, Lt Cdr Paul Snelling (DE&S) leading the late contributors.

The RN bowling attack took heart from the batsmen's performance and had little trouble in knocking over the SAN batting line-up, with Mne Ash Haw (42 Cdo) taking 3-13, to record an opening match victory and bragging rights.

There were tougher challenges ahead: the next match threw the Navy into the lion's den against premier league club Western Province CC.

The decision to bowl first with temperatures reaching 32 degrees had the RN on the back foot from early on.

Despite playing on the quickest pitch they had bowled on for many a year the Navy bowlers failed to make in-roads into a powerful Western Province batting card and faced a daunting 249-run chase which proved too much as the

sailors crumbled to 55 all out, coming back down to earth with a dull thud.

The arrival of the RN's most experienced player Cdr Chris Slocombe (DE&S) could only strengthen the bowling and so it proved as the next opposition of Cape Town CC were restricted to what was believed to be an attainable target.

The RN middle order ground to a halt in the face of restrictive home bowling and left the late order no chance of reaching victory.

The middle weekend of the tour had always been targeted as an opportunity to secure some positive results as the team bus headed away from central Cape Town to Stellenbosch and then Constantia.

Team aspirations were not to be disappointed. Playing the Scorpions CC beside a wine-bottling facility, the RN won the toss and elected to bat and set a large total of 243-8 on the back of a maiden RN century for Mne Cullum Smith (45 Cdo) and a supporting 50 from skipper Snelling.

Bowling on the back of such a solid batting performance the Senior Service were always in control, with Ash Haw again bagging three wickets, and secured victory with overs in hand.

The Constantia Oval hosted the next day's game against the Western Province Academy and the picturesque setting will remain with the tour party as long as the incredible result will.

The prospective first-class cricketers were out to secure professional contracts and their bowling highlighted this as the sailors were unable to see out their allocation of overs and posted what looked a below-par score despite a confident 37 from ET(WE) Harry Young (MWS).

Nobody had foreseen what was to follow. A fine opening spell by Lt Jonathan Parker (DCSA) and Ash Haw, who finished with 3-33, took four early wickets and when wicket keeper Lt Andrew Ainsley grabbed two quick catches standing up to the stumps the sailors sensed blood. With the scores level it fell to LMA Gareth Freeman (Portsmouth NHS) to take the final wicket and leave the game as a tie.

The final cricketing push saw matches against Groot Drakenstein GC and a second

meeting with the Academy players, this time in the guise of a Western Province U19s.

The Groot Drakenstein ground, in the middle of the wine lands, boasts the first grass wicket laid in South Africa but sadly a thunderstorm precluded this from being used and instead an artificial wicket was laid which all the bowlers struggled to come to terms with.

The Groot Drakenstein club is steeped in history and the pavilion was a shrine to the greats of the old game.

Local custom saw the visitors bat first so as not to be unduly affected by the midday sun but was balanced by having to drink a between-innings toast to the hosts.

Despite runs from Snelling, Mne Alvin Pollard (CTCRM), Ainsley and Parker the target never looked enough and was chased down in quick time.

Could the players raise their game just one more time and see off the Academy players to finish the tour on a high?

Winning the toss and batting on a damp track the sailors were always fighting with their backs to the wall but runs once more from Smith, Ainsley, Parker and a quickfire knock by ET Marlon Crichton (Sutherland) gave a glimpse of hope.

This was quickly extinguished as attacking batting and a handful of dropped catches gave the U19 side an easy victory and produced a final tour reckoning of played seven, won two, lost four, tied one.

The record books may not show this to have been a successful tour but as so often pure statistics do not tell the true story. The squad is certainly stronger as a group and more than ready to face the challenges of the 2008 season.

In terms of individuals, Smith and Young look to have long careers ahead of them, the middle order has shown depth, fight and flair, Haw seems to be developing as an all-rounder and the opening attack of Parker and Adams, when fit, bowl with genuine pace and fire.

■ **TICKETS** for the Army-Navy encounter at Lords on Tuesday July 29 are now available: adults £10, children and OAPs £5. Details from Lt Cdr David Cooke 02392 723741 or rns04@a.dii.mod.uk

FLAGSHIP HMS Illustrious rowed to glory in the Armed Forces winter league with a range of medals that have just been announced.

The league consists of five rounds stretched between October and February, with teams of four and eight covering distances ranging from 2,000m to 16,000m.

The carrier competed in three categories: men's open VIII, ladies' open IV and men's over 35 IV (the average age of the latter team was 42 with one entrant, WO 'Brum' Endall, being a sprightly 47).

The men's open VIII took silver in the Armed Forces challenge and also achieved silver in the whole league, the ladies took gold and silver, and the 'mature men' took a thoroughly-deserved gold in the challenge and silver in the whole league.

"The reason we entered this was as a result of the sports day we held on board against the USMC last year," explained Brum.

"When we beat them in the rowing, we had a pretty good team that was ready for another challenge... which turned out to be this competition. And what fun it was!"

More fun was provided by the return of an old favourite: *It's a Knockout.*

After a busy ship's programme, the PT staff decided to use the no-fly day to get the ship's company together for some 'fun in the sun'.

The event involved 17 teams of ten, who entered in various forms of fancy dress.

There were ten 'disciplines' to complete, including 'knock the EWO off the slippery pole', 'flipper dribble', 'fill your boots' and 'colander relay', all of which involved a good quantity of water.

Eventually the fun and games came to an end as the sun began to slip over the horizon with the overall winners being the AED team.



● **Going logo... WO Pete Berrow (captain RN squash) and Cdr Steve Shaw (chairman RN squash) model branded shirts as part of a trial by the RNSRA.**

The association is trying out long and short-sleeve shirts and hopes that other RN sports associations will adopt this initiative, funding for which will be supplied by HMS Temeraire.

Representatives from associations and clubs interested in this corporate wear should contact Lt Cdr David Cooke (9380 23741 or rns04@a.dii.mod.uk) for further details.

Run in the sun

THE Army is inviting RN and RM teams to take part in an exhausting day-long endurance race next month.

2 Signal Regiment is hosting Race The Sun, a 15-leg competition, spread across 200km of North Yorkshire.

The May 15 race comprises running, paddling, cycling, cross-country, forced march, a half-marathon, mountain biking, a fell run, orienteering, swimming and finally a 3km stretcher race.

Each team can enter up to two competitors per leg – the fastest time counts. A team member can compete in more than one leg, but cannot repeat the same discipline. The stretcher race requires a six-strong team.

Details from Capt Shaun Wilson on 94777 5899.



● CPO 'Bomber' Mills grapples with his opponent in the wrestling discipline under the watchful eye of the referee

Caber intensive

THERE are some mighty tossers aboard HMS Campbeltown.

They're also not bad at tug-of-war, truck pulling, and traditional wrestling as the frigate's ship's company learned in Bahrain at a rather unusual sports day.

Campbeltown was invited to take part in the **Gaelic Games** – a sort of Highland Games but in the sand and dust of the Gulf rather than amid the glens and peaks of Scotland.

'Clan Campbeltown' were placed third after demonstrating their prowess in tossing the caber, shot putt, tug-of-war, wrestling, and hauling trucks – the latter two events proved particularly popular (and demanding). "I'm going to struggle when I get back on board, I can feel the aches and pains already but it has been a fantastic day," enthused CPO(ET(ME)) 'Bomber' Mills.

The ship's most senior rating, Executive Warrant Officer Jim Mustard, said the games had proved a good morale booster and a welcome change from the more typical games of rugby and football.

"It's been a great day, hard work but lots of fun and great to do something different," he added.

The sailors celebrated their third place in traditional style: a barbecue and a few cold beers.



● Two climbers struggle up the imposing slopes of Makalu

'One of the hardest propositions of all'

AFTER four years of planning, they're off.

While fellow Britons were heading to church on Easter Sunday or perhaps enjoying a lazy day, 42 Service personnel, drawn from all arms of the Forces, headed to Nepal to grapple with one of the most demanding mountains on the planet: Makalu.

Fewer than 250 people have made the summit of the Himalayan peak since it was first scaled in 1955 (the same number climb Everest every year) and just two have reached it via the perilous south-east ridge. The late Sir Edmund Hillary branded the mountain: "One of the hardest propositions of all."

The 2008 military expedition is attempting a world-first traverse of Makalu, although there are four separate strands to the assault on the mountain. A main team will attempt the summit; a subsidiary main team will back up the leaders; a high-altitude development team will aim to stretch potential future main team members; and a junior team is taking on a safer but

nonetheless demanding goal – the highest trekking hill in the Himalayas.

More than 170 personnel from the three Services applied to take part, 80 were selected for a series of training sessions and camps, and just 42 were selected for the final four teams.

By the time you read this, the team should be establishing their base camp and getting accustomed to extreme altitudes, before beginning the attempt on the summit which rises 7,800m (26,000ft) above the earth.

The most demanding part of the climb will be overcoming a four-mile knife-edge ridge, known as the Black Gendarme, in bitter cold and howling winds.

"It's like scaling the Rock of Gibraltar with high altitude boots on, thick mittens, and about half the oxygen. It's pretty full-on," said expedition leader Sqn Ldr David Tait.

You can learn more about the expedition and its members at www.makalu2008.org

● The RN challenge for the ball against the Army during the 1-1 draw at Aldershot

Picture: Graeme Main, Soldier Magazine



CONGRATULATIONS to the Royal Air Force who are the Seniors Inter Service champions for 2008 – thanks to a victory on RN home soil.

This year's contest opened with the RN and Army clashing at the ground of Blue Square Premier's Aldershot Town.

The Army took the lead on 20 minutes, but ten minutes later the RN equalised through POET (WE) Phil Archbold (HMS Collingwood), who was our best player on the night.

So it stayed until the final score, marking a good Navy performance and extending their unbeaten run to eight matches.

A week later, the RAF beat the Army 3-0 – and by all accounts they played really well and thoroughly deserved the emphatic win.

That left the airmen against the sailors as the decider, with the RN needing to win.

The match had to be moved from Fratton Park as Pompey were directed to play a league match so a couple of hundred of us gathered at Burnaby Road in quiet expectation.

Unfortunately our boys were completely outplayed on the night and the RAF ran out deserved 2-0 winners, with goals in either half.

The first, on 20 minutes, was an absolute screamer from outside the box, following good link-up play down the left wing.

The Navy were disappointed that they hadn't given a good performance, and to be honest they never looked like scoring.

All in all though, it has been a good season (won five, drew two, lost two) for this squad that is still



Onside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

improving under the management of WO Ian Binks and Capt Steve Marr RM.

With the emergence of quality youngsters, thanks to the good work being done at youth level, we all hope we can get our hands on that Inter Services cup soon.

RN Seniors 3 Cornwall 3 (South West Counties Cup).

This was an impressive fight-back for the RN, who were punished for some mistakes in the first hour of the match and were 3-0 down with twenty minutes to go.

But two goals from towering centre back AET Tom Ardley (HMS Heron) and a late equaliser from ET(ME) Danny Kerr (our best player on the day) was enough to give us a creditable draw.

Cpl Lee Farrell (CTCRM) also played really well and deserves mention.

If Devon beat Cornwall in the last game to be played (after *Navy News* went to press), then the Navy will have won the cup, otherwise we will be runners-up.

RN U23s 1 London University 1

On a bright afternoon in Fulham the RN U23s played their final warm-up game before the Inter Services.

With LMA Keating (HMS Drake) and MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) making their full debuts, the RN side started brightly, playing at a high tempo and creating regular chances from OM

McEvoy (HMS Collingwood) and WEA O'Neil which the home goalkeeper did well to keep out.

On 22 minutes Mne Rule (RM Poole) drove forward and smashed a shot from 30 yards that thumped against the crossbar and bounced out to MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) who headed the rebound against the post before WEA O'Neil (HMS Collingwood) drove the ball high into the net.

The Navy side continued to push forward and only an acrobatic save from the University keeper from an ET(WE) Farnsworth shot kept the score down to 1-0 at half time.

The second half started brightly but although the RN were continuing to create chances, they couldn't find the second goal.

WEA Ritchie (HMS Collingwood) missed a great opportunity from a corner when he found himself unmarked at the far post but headed wide.

With ten minutes left WEA Ritchie found himself isolated with the University striker in the RN goalmouth and conceded a penalty which the London striker duly dispatched past the RN keeper WEA Barker (HMS Collingwood).

The Navy continued to press for the winner and it almost came when, from a free kick, the ball was headed back across the goal for NA Card (HMS Ocean) to smash over the bar from four yards. MEM Kerr (HMS Exeter)

then hit a half volley from the edge of the area which the University again turned over the bar.

RN U23s 2 RAF 0

The Navy lads were in confident mood prior to their first Inter Service game v RAF away at Cosford.

After a frenetic opening, the RN began to impose themselves on the game, with both AET Brookes and OM McEvoy (HMS Collingwood) dictating the pace of the game from the centre of midfield.

MEM Davidson (HMS Lancaster) and WEA Ritchie (HMS Collingwood) were rocks at the heart of the defence.

After 17 minutes OM McEvoy played a slide-rule pass through for MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) to coolly finish.

The second half started slowly for us, as the RAF had the wind at their backs. They almost grabbed an equaliser within 15 seconds of the re-start were it not for the athleticism of MEM Keneally (HMS Bristol) who dived low to turn a shot on to the post.

This galvanised the Navy side and on 70 minutes an RN free kick from ET(WE) Farnsworth was curled in for WEA O'Neil (HMS Collingwood) to head our second goal.

■ Last month, we reported that free tickets were available to personnel based in the Portsmouth area for certain Pompey home games (the next one is the clash with Blackburn Rovers on April 26). Only Nelson-based personnel should contact their PTI staff. Sailors and marines based at Sultan and Collingwood should get in touch with their respective PTIs.

Sunseekers head to Dorset

SID Lawrence and his merry band of volunteers from the **RN Automobile Club** once again supported this year's Rallye Sunseeker held in Bournemouth.

In a case of *déjà vu*, the RN motoring buffs served as marshals on Post 15, situated in Ringwood South, making sure racers and spectators were safe.

Competitors raced past at roughly 60-second intervals during two stages, one in the morning, one in late afternoon.

During the morning stage Sid and his crew had to put their firefighting skills to good use when a Subaru Impreza caught fire between post 14 and 15 with a blown turbo; the connecting rod also decided it was going to exit the top of the engine.

The 2008 event saw the MG Metro 6R4 Owners' Club celebrating the 21st anniversary of the victory of Malcolm Wilson

and the late Nigel Harris on the Citroen Winter Rally Round 1 of the National Rally Championship. A generation later, the Rallye Sunseeker is the first-round race.

The MG buffs were in attendance in numbers; some 25 6R4s was the biggest gathering for some time and 16 gave demonstration runs around part of the Somerley House stage.

Again there was a good showing from competitors: 96 entrants competed over 70 miles of Dorset and Hampshire, with stages taking place in Bournemouth, Wareham, Uddens Forest, copses north and south of Ringwood, and within the grounds of Somerley House.

The weather was fine and dry with slight showers later in the day.

As for the RNAC enthusiasts, their morale was maintained all day long thanks to regular supplies of refreshments from Sid's kitchen.



● Mud on the road... An Impreza WRC kicks up the dirt during the Rallye Sunseeker

Picture: PO 'Dutchy' Holland, Phoenix CBRN DC

Meet the soaring Igls



● **Head start... A RN competitor takes off down the track on the skeleton**
Pictures: Lt Cdr Graeme Stringer

THE 2008 winter season proved to be another successful time in the development of the RN skeleton bob team, writes PO(D) Sid Lawrence.

The 2008 Inter Service Championships were held at the Olympic Bobsleigh, Skeleton and Luge Track in Igls.

The RN once again entered a continually-improving team as the final results proved. Twelve of us made up the squad this season including myself as manager, coach and race official.

Before the Inter Service race we held the RN Championships, based on the fastest joint time over two runs, with the men and ladies in separate races.

The event also included a guest class open race to all other Service riders and all members of the RAF and Army Teams entered this event.

Results

Men: 1 LD Sean Dunstan (SDU1 Plymouth) – he also won the Admiral Stopford Arms, fastest speed plate and men's fastest single time of the race; 2 Mne Mathew Leach (Cdo Logs Regt) – also winner of the men's fastest start; 3 LMET Robert Pritchard-Jones (Drake)

Ladies: 1 Logs Becky Stevenson (Ocean) – also winner of the ladies' fastest single time; 2 Logs Sarah Rushton (Bulwark); 3 Logs Samantha Niel (Ocean) – also winner of the ladies' fastest start

Next up were the GB Skeleton Bobsleigh Championships. All members of the RN team entered and achieved some very good results against other competitors who have been competing throughout the season.

The results were made more impressive by the fact that all the Royal Navy competitors, with the

exception of three men, had only started the sport two weeks before the championships.

Results

Men: 13 LD Dunstan; 15 Mne Leach; 17 LMET Pritchard-Jones
Ladies: 9 Logs Stevenson; 13 Logs Rushton; 17 Logs Niel

The climax of the week was undoubtedly the Inter Service Championships.

A year's preparation and months of training in gyms and on running tracks by the athletes was going to prove worthwhile.

The Inter Service race, which was again based on the joint time of two runs using only the five fastest male riders with four counting and three fastest female riders.

This for me was the hardest part of the fortnight, because I had the unenviable job of selecting the final team from the previous two weeks' training knowing that some of the riders would feel disappointed.

On a warm and sunny day, we started the race.

After the first run with all its total disregard for personal safety, sheer determination and making use of the knowledge built up over the previous two weeks training on the track, the Navy riders were in second place for both male and female competitors.

Encouraged by the success of the first runs, all eight Navy riders then raced their hearts out in the second and final run and both teams maintained their second place standings.

The ladies team in particular did very well as they had only started sliding from the top of the track the previous week and had to work very hard to beat the much more experienced teams from the RAF and Army who had also been training and racing on various tracks during the season.

Logs Becky Stevenson claimed the 2008 individual Inter Service title with two outstanding runs; her success took the ladies team to second place and her fastest time was unbeaten by any other female competitor. She was also awarded the fastest novice trophy.

In all, considering the lack of experience of the RN riders, this race was a great success and throughout the fortnight all members of the team trained hard during the day, then worked late into the night preparing equipment, working on their sleds and runners.

As a team, they pulled together to ensure the future of RN skeleton is now fully set in motion.

Results

Men: 7 LD Dunstan; 9 Mne Leach; 11 LMET Pritchard-Jones
Ladies: 1 Logs Stevenson; 5 Logs Rushton; 7 Logs Niel

Plans are already under way for the forthcoming season starting with ice training camps, followed by the British Championships, RN Championships and ultimately the Inter Services of 2009.

We have now firmly established our place in this awesomely exciting sport and proved we are serious competitors.

This year will see Royal Navy team members training at the facilities in Bath University, including the specially built sprint start that replicates the top of a bobsleigh track, we are also entering summer sprint start competitions and taking part in Great Britain Team selections, hopefully a place in our national team will once again be filled by a Royal Navy athlete.

Anyone, male or female, who has a passion for speed, lycra, and lunacy, contact Sid on 9375 65454.

Sleighting all challengers

THE Mo Hammond Trophy is in Royal Navy hands for the third time in four years after an Inter Service bobsleigh triumph in Igls, Austria.

Formula 1 on ice has often been the best way to describe the sport of Bobsleigh, writes Lt Cdr Graeme Stringer (HMS Ocean).

At speeds of 70-90mph and experiencing 4-5g in some of the solid ice curves that are found at the Olympic bobsleigh tracks in Europe and North America, it is not a sport for slouches.

Training for the sport has also developed at pace and the Army have taken a lead in recent years with significant investment in both equipment and coaching staff.

Fortunately, a close working relationship established over the years has enabled up to a dozen RN/RM novices to attend Army training camps in Norway and Canada in recent years and the dividends have been obvious.

Events in Austria this year began with a single week of training for the less experienced bobsleighters and this was an opportunity to get used to a new track.

The pressure was going to be on for the RN this year as the Army had only recently held their championships on the same track and so had a head start.

Training went well with new drivers Lt Fiona Bell and POAH Nige Bickley (both from Ocean) quickly learning that the 1,220m track at Igls can bite like the best of them.

The weekend saw the arrival of the more experienced members of the team with captain Mne Lee Johnston fresh from the World Championship four-man race at Altenberg, Germany where he achieved a very creditable 13th position and Mne Shiner Wright who achieved 19th.

The championship week proper saw the pace of training runs increase threefold.

With all ice disciplines, both military and civilian, taking part and unseasonably high temperatures of 15-20° at the venue, tension was building with the Navy team rapidly proving to be favourites for the Inter Service event.

The middle of the week and race day one – the Inter Services are conducted in the same way as the World Championships with four two-man runs taking place over two days – saw the RN establish a substantial lead over the Army and the RAF.

A brief diversion after this race was the RN/RM participation in the ITV show *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway* with the RM members of the team taking the lead.

Mne Johnston drove the four-man bobsleigh for two celebrity crews for the Ant versus Dec portion of the show, the other crew members being the footballer Lee Sharp, former boy band singer Jason 'J' Brown, model Melinda Messenger and actress Bonnie Langford.

It was back to business on the second day.

Temperatures at the track dropped, but tensions rose with all to play for – and splits of hundredths of a second possibly deciding the outcome.

The strength in depth of the RN team came to the fore and an easy victory was obtained securing the Mo Hammond trophy for a record third year.

The RN/RM Championships were run coincidentally with the Inter

Service event and the team were privileged to have Lord Glentoran present trophies and colours; Lord Glentoran won a gold medal in the two-man bobsleigh at the 1964 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck and is the President of the British Bobsleigh Association.

The British Championships are traditionally the final race of the bobsleigh season and allow many entries from diverse privately-sponsored teams to the more professionally-funded teams which represent the UK on the world stage – more often than not predominantly Service teams.

A similar pattern emerged as in the Inter Services but this time with Royal Marine Sgt John Jackson winning the two-man race.

The four-man race was perhaps one of the closest in recent years and significantly was won by Mne Lee Johnston with his closest rival S/Sgt Sean Olsson coming a close second.

The significance of Sean's team was that he had almost completely recreated the bronze medal-winning Nagano Olympic crew of 1998 and some inspired driving saw him take the lead after the first of two runs.

Carrying an injury that had plagued him all season, Johnston had to dig deep to overcome the deficit of the first run and to eventually win with a combined time of 1m 46.72s compared with Olsson's time of 1m 46.79s.

All in all, the week proved very successful for the RN/RM bobsleigh team with the British and Inter Service Championship titles returned to dark blue ownership.

The Navy's luge team also took a giant step forward by entering a complete team – CPOAEA Dave Terry (CHF), Sgt Damian Leaver (Ocean), NA Taff Wilcox (Ocean) and NA Annie Edwards (Ocean, pictured left) – in the Inter Service Championships for the first time in many years.

The races were held on the final two days after ten days of rigorous training.

The team worked very hard and had some excellent start times off the ramp, experiencing only minor injuries, unlike the Army squad who sadly lost three athletes to serious injury.

The RAF were the worthy winners of the Inter Service competition with the Army second and the RN taking the wooden spoon.

The result, however, was immaterial as all RN lugers finished safely, having achieved speeds of up to 94kph (58mph) and some very satisfactory personal performances.

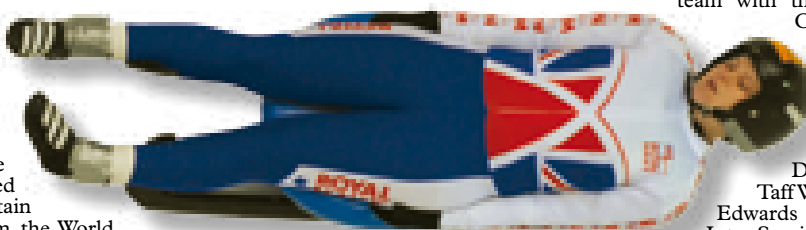
In particular, NA Annie Edwards who had only attended the Army ice camp in November as a novice, earned second place overall in the individual ladies race and became the RN ladies champion at the same time.

She excelled again a day later by coming runner-up in the British Championships (Ladies). Sgt Damian Leaver won the RN Championship having already won the Army Novice Championships in January.

The events of the past two months have clearly marked the arrival of RN Luge at this level and the aspiration is for the team to build on this season with a concerted recruitment effort during the summer.

The re-invigoration of luge in the RN has been a difficult process and would not have been possible without the support of the RN Bobsleigh management and the significant material support provided by Army Luge, for which S/Sgt Graham Holmes RLC was a major contributor.

If you think you have what it takes to represent your Service at luge, then contact CPO Dave Terry at Yeovilton on 93510 6980 to find out about ice camps later in the year.



On the Crest(a) of a wave

THE bell rings from the control tower; you take a final deep breath followed by a sprint start and dive on to your toboggan.

Suddenly, you are hurtling down a solid ice track through tight and steeply banking corners with only minimal control, at speeds of up to 80mph, with your nose only inches from the ice.

All too soon, you (hopefully) cross the finish line, with the rest of the world a barely-noticeable blur, the run has taken you less than a minute to travel the just-over-¾-mile-long track from top to bottom but; it passes in the blink of an eye.

Why on earth would you want to do that? Because it is brilliant that is why, writes Maj Jamie Summers RM, team captain.

This is a very simple description of the **Cresta Run** in St Moritz, Switzerland.

The run is unique, similar in some ways to bobsleigh or luge but with a bit more risk involved and tight lycra body suits are compulsory.

Riders tackle the run head first on toboggans that weigh around 40kg; the run itself requires not only an ability to control your own fear but also to master the toboggan you are riding – it will not make it down the very fast and tight corners on its own.

The Inter Service Cresta Championships are the culmination of careful preparation and training by all the team.

This year the Navy was in the unusual position of defending the Inter Services trophy, something that has not happened since the 1980s.

The team this year was made up of four bootnecks (who were all hoofing) and four matelots (cracking blokes).

Training went really well and all riders made good progress, although there were a few fallers along the way.

Special mention must go Capt Luke Kenny RM who rode exceptionally well in his novice season and fought his way into the team.

The squad also welcomed a visit from Brig Andy Salmon RM, who eagerly took up the challenge of riding the Cresta (the team hope he enjoyed it and that the broken ribs recover soon).

By the time race day approached, the much larger RAF team were considered hot favourites. We didn't think they were much 'cop' and knew when it mattered we would perform.

After the first few rides the RN team had set the pace and had effectively 'blown' the RAF away right from the outset.

Lt Cdr Angus Essenhigh clocked the fastest time of the day and won the individual event.

However, with a team of six riders and four counting over three courses, it wasn't over until our fourth man made it safely down the track.

That task fell to Sgt Ian Breeze, a Cresta legend but also prone to falling; if he fell the RAF would win.

Tension was mounting at the finish and the RAF team were overheard praying for Breezey to 'do one'.

Finally he came screaming into view in the prone position doing over 80mph and as he slowed to the finish a great grin appeared; we had done it again.

If you're interested in joining the Cresta team, contact Maj Summers on 93831 8733.

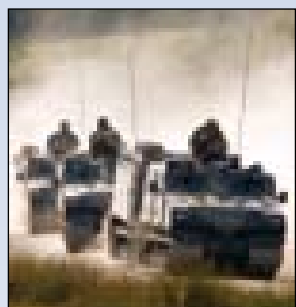
Next month



**Top bombing
part 1 –
a day with
HMS
Vengeance**



**Top bombing
part 2 –
the Naval
Strike Wing
return to sea**



**May the
Norse be
with you
– the art
of Viking
warfare**

Plus



**Birth of a
nation – the
Navy in the
Palestine
emergency
60 years on**



Lord's a-leaping



Sweet victory in the lion's den

YOU have to feel sorry for the French.

OK, actually you don't.

But losing on home turf twice in the space of 24 hours to their greatest rivals in rugby union must have been a bitter blow.

The second victory came courtesy – to a large extent – of the boot of Jonny Wilkinson.

The first, less-publicised triumph was no less sweet – and the home crowd no less hostile.

Twelve months ago, *Les Bleus* were toppled by a strong RN side in Portsmouth to lift the Babcock Challenge trophy.

This year, the fixture switched to Paris and the home of Stade Francais.

The right note was set from the outset, the French naval choir ensuring that an intimidating atmosphere was created as the final notes of *La Marseillaise* died away.

It was therefore perhaps no surprise that the Marine Nationale, playing in their traditional blue, were the stronger of the two sides in the early exchanges.

Their clever mix between hard forward-driving play and incisive lines from their back driving ensured that the RN's defence was fully tested. However with 15 minutes gone, the only success for this early pressure was a sweetly-struck penalty.

Having weathered the early storm it was the turn of the British to exert pressure of their own, with the half-back pairing of 'Cowboy' John (Bulwark) and Rob Lloyd (42 Cdo) orchestrating the back play, forcing the French to show their mettle in defence.

However it wasn't long before the powerful running of the Navy's back three resulted in the first try for wing Josh Drauniniu (CTCRM) which was not converted.

Further pressure from the RN provided Rob Lloyd with the opportunity for an easy three points.

By now the Brits were playing with a

freedom and tempo that was a joy to watch.

Time and again they troubled the French by attacking from everywhere and keeping the ball alive and in hand even when under pressure.

Deft handling from the forwards ensured that the backs were often able to run at an unstructured defence and it was therefore no surprise when centre Callum McCrae (Cdo Logs Regt) picked a lovely, out-to-in angle to score a well-worked try close to the French posts. With the successful conversion from Lloyd, the RN were well placed at half time with a 15-3 lead and the local crowd largely silenced.

If the confident French crowd was quiet just before half time then the early play of the second half woke them up and reignited French hopes.

A lovely break down their right-hand 15m channel resulted in an excellent score wide out which unfortunately they couldn't convert.

The score was now 8-15, the crowd were cheering and singing for their beloved *Les Bleus* and the home team duly responded by raising the intensity of their game.

Further French pressure saw their forwards gaining just rewards for their efforts by driving over from short range to bring the scores even closer at 13-15.

The forward exchanges were such that the match referee, who was managing the game very well, decided that two of the front row needed some time for self reflection; a particularly fiercely-contested ruck had developed into a forwards' version of Entente Cordial.

With the momentum now fully with the French, the RN had to absorb sustained pressure on their own goal line.

Immense commitment from the pack ensured that the Royal Navy often had the nudge forward at a series of 5m scrums, whilst the second row pairing of Justin Doney (814 NAS) and Marsh Cormack (845 NAS) maintained an impressive work rate – an

outstanding performance given that these two players had only that week returned from deployment overseas.

Number 8 Matt Parker (CTCRM) merits special mention: he assumed the captaincy in the second half and his leadership was key in ensuring the RN's composure in the face of the French onslaught.

With the French storm blowing itself out, the Senior Service team showed that they were always awake to the opportunity of playing rugby with ball in hand.

In a rare foray into their opponent's half, they again busted the first line of defence and forced the penalty as the French tried in vain to slow down the play. Rob Lloyd landed the penalty to give the RN some breathing space as the clock ran down.

The final score of 18-13 meant that the Senior Service had become the first team to win away from home and successfully defend the trophy.

Though naturally jubilant with the victory, the Royal Navy team, through their President Admiral Neil Morissetti, acknowledged it had been a very close contest.

The match had been superbly staged by the French Navy and match co-sponsors Thales and Babcock.

Everyone agreed that this was comfortably the best match thus far in the series and that the Marine Nationale continued to make rapid progress with their rugby, both on and off the field.

The reasons why they were French military champions were evident for all to see and they will undoubtedly mount a very strong challenge when the teams next meet, provisionally scheduled for April next year.

The annual challenge has quickly matured into an event that is eagerly anticipated by both teams who, although they share so many values as sailors, marines and sportsmen, know that for the 80 minutes of the Babcock Challenge there is no Entente Cordial but plenty of healthy respect.

HEADING the field at Sandown, the 'Galloping Padre' makes history as the first naval chaplain to race in the Grand Military Cup.

Sadly, shortly after LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins took this photograph, the Galloping Padre – aka Father Simon Beveridge – was run out of the race by two loose horses as he continued to head the pack past the grandstand at the famous course.

But the Bish, based at RNAS Yeovilton, is unbowed – and has entered his name in the RN history books on his mount Feeling Better.

"It was going very well until I got taken out by two loose horses and run into the rails," he said.

"I've come off horses before, but not in that way. It's not uncommon, but it can happen.

"I was really looking forward to the race – it's something I've been working towards for several years.

"While I'm very disappointed, I'm pleased that I'm still in one piece."

The padre has already made racing history as the first minister of the church to win a point-to-point – he enjoyed a 50-1 victory at Wadebridge in December.

Simon, who's been a naval chaplain for 15 years, developed a taste for horse racing while serving at Lympstone when he was introduced to a course and began riding for a local trainer.

By 2005 he had progressed sufficiently to complete his Amateur National Hunt Jockey's course at Newmarket and apply for his Category A racing licence.

"I've been racing for just one season, but I'd like to race some more," Simon added.

"I'm a chaplain, not a jockey, but racing is something I like to do."

When not seeing to the spiritual needs of personnel at Yeovilton, the padre can be found practising most weekends at John Ryall's farm in Rimpleton.



100% NEW LIFESTYLE. NEW ZEALAND. NAVY

See page 43 for information on the exciting new opportunities available now.

‘An immortal deed’

The Zeebrugge Raid

ETERNAL WATCH

NOISES IN THE NIGHT

AN ENGLISH CRUISER!

IN THE dark of a biting-cold April night, figures clad in thick coats covered by a canvas cloak paced up and down the concrete and granite structure, occasionally pausing to stand at a parapet and stare at the waves crashing below.

The warm spring weather had given way to the return of winter. Rain fell incessantly. The bitter North Sea wind drove the damp cold down to the very bone.

There was no noise this night, save for the waters of the North Sea breaking against the pillars and granite of this great triumph of Man over Nature.

The Mole of Zeebrugge arched into the North Sea for more than a mile, a huge shield which protected a narrow lock and canal to the great city of Bruges.

The Mole was more than a mere breakwater, more than a mere pier. It was a marvel of Victorian/Edwardian engineering, 80 yards across at its widest point, carrying a road and rail line, goods sheds, cranes and derricks, a railway station.

To these peacetime features, the Germans had added at least half a dozen guns, bunkers, a flying boat base, barbed wire and machine guns.

It wasn't just the Mole which was a fortress. There was no coastline on earth better safeguarded by steel and concrete.

Along a 15-mile stretch of Belgium's shores, the *Marinekorps Flanders* stood watch with more than 225 guns – calibres ranging from small 3.5in to fearsome 15in. Fifteen batteries ringed Zeebrugge alone.

They protected the lair of the beast, the home of *Unterseebootsflotille Flanders*, the Flanders U-boat Flotilla. The beast was safe in his lair: huge concrete ‘pens’ protected these undersea monsters from the guns of the Grand Fleet and the bombs of the newly-formed Royal Air Force.

Even outside his lair, the beast seemed invulnerable. For every two merchant ships sunk in Atlantic waters by German submarines, at least one fell victim to boats of the Flanders Flotilla.

But the beast had an Achilles heel. His lair was eight miles from the sea. A canal bore him from his pen to open waters at Zeebrugge. Block the canal and the beast would be trapped.

It was too simple a plan for the ordinary German marine to comprehend. Rumours circulating the *Marinekorps Flanders* were far more grandiose, far more outlandish, far more believable.

“Over there, on the other side of the Channel, they're up to something,” the men convinced themselves.

“Tommy is readying a great fleet – hand-picked assault troops and landing forces, 20,000 men in all.”

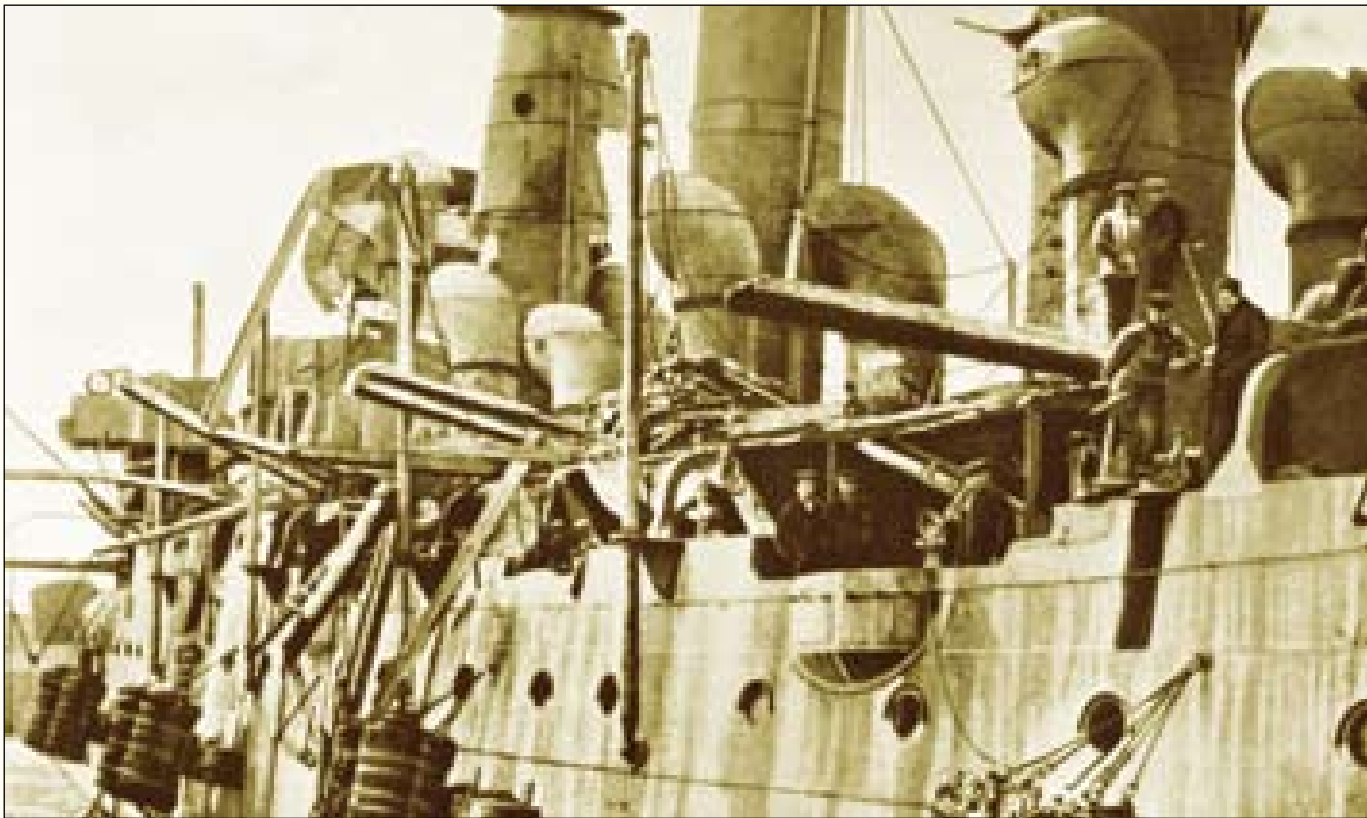
Tommy would roll up the Flanders coast from east and west, smoking out every bunker, battery and dugout with flamethrowers.

The men's leaders did nothing to dispel or quash such rumours. Warnings from above merely confirmed the marines' doubts: crews of coastal batteries shall die at their posts!

But when? Not tonight. No tonight was like every other night in Flanders. The luminous hands of the guards' wrist watches lethargically crept around.

“*Nichts Neue?*”

Nothing new? the guards asked each other as they passed routinely.



● ‘The one naval exploit of the war that moved and still moves the imagination of the nation...’ Blockships *Iphigenia* (nearest the camera), *Intrepid* and *Thetis* scuttled in the entrance to the Zeebrugge canal

“*Nein, nichts Neue.*”

It was now approaching 1am on Tuesday, April 23 1918 German time – a few minutes before midnight on Monday April 22 in Britain.

One German sentry seized another.

“Horch, didn't you hear anything.”

“There's a growling noise somewhere.”

It was difficult to distinguish anything above the crashing of the waves against the granite wall of the Mole.

But the rumble grew louder, a constant, rhythmic sound, a noise made by Man, not by Nature.

“That's the sound of an engine,” a guard yelled.

A star shell lit up the April night, slowly fading before being devoured by the grey-black heavens.

The sentries stared out across the Mole wall. The rain ran in small streams down their faces.

In the distance, somewhere over the horizon, a slight, brief flicker, then nothing.

Seconds later a huge fountain of earth was tossed up as a shell crashed into a meadow behind one of the 15 batteries ringing Zeebrugge.

“There! There! *Alarm! Alarm!*”

Bunkers and dugouts along the Mole emptied as the men of the *Marinekorps Flanders* rushed for their guns.

The men seized their binoculars and scoured the ocean, but all they could see was a billowing, surging mist which hid everything.

Flares raced into the heavens but did little more than give the mist a yellow-brown hue.

“Can you hear that?” one sentry asked. “The noise of engines. Utterly clear!”

Alarm!

In the signals bunker, a telegraphist hurriedly tapped out a curt message to headquarters: Z E E B R U G G E B E D R O H T. *Zeebrugge in danger.*

The batteries on the coast opened fire, hurling a curtain of steel into the mist. The guns on the Mole joined in.

The beams of lamps and searchlights danced in the April

night. Suddenly they caught a dark shadow, racing at full speed for the Mole.

Alarm! Ein englischer Kreuzer!

Thus began the first commando raid.

NEW MAN AT HELM

BRAWN NOT BRAINS

CORKING THE BOTTLE

The old year had just three days to run as Roger Keyes waited outside the office of the First Sea Lord in the Admiralty. 1917 had not been a good year for the Royal Navy. The U-boat menace had seriously undermined public confidence in the world's grandest navy. The submarine peril had cost the First Sea Lord his job. Lionised at the war's opening as a 20th-Century Nelson, John Rushworth Jellicoe had failed to deliver a modern-day Trafalgar and then failed to counter the German submarine. Jellicoe buckled. The war was all but lost, he had warned the Cabinet that summer.

Jellicoe's pessimism and an increasingly hostile popular press forced Lloyd George's hand. On the night before Christmas, the axe fell on the admiral. Into his shoes stepped Admiral Rosslyn ‘Rosy’ Wemyss, a rather affable, monocled chap. Wemyss was more courtier than sailor. He mixed in the right circles, he was a close friend of the king, he spoke fluent French, he could – and did – charm guests thanks to his talents as a raconteur.

Wemyss was not a master of the battlefield. He did not pretend to be. But he sought men who would re-invigorate the Navy, and Roger Keyes was just such a man.

Keyes was one of the Admiralty's young Turks. ‘Action’ was Roger Keyes' watchword. To every problem there was an offensive solution, the 45-year-old rear admiral reasoned as the Royal Navy's Director of Plans.

Keyes' gaze fell upon the Dover Patrol, the command which barred the famous strait to the foe. Except that it did not. Too many U-boats were slipping through the elaborate

defences established by Vice Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, Keyes argued. And too little was being done about the lair of the beast. Roger Keyes demanded action.

Bacon had dismissed a raid on Zeebrugge as dangerous and impossible which would achieve nothing more than posthumous medals for gallant young officers seeking immortal glory.

To Reginald Bacon, there was only one way to bottle up the Hun in his hideout – build an impregnable wall across the canal entrance at Zeebrugge... but the Hun would hardly afford their foe time for such a move.

Bacon was cool, rational, calculated. He possessed a brilliant mind. Keyes was everything that Bacon was not. He was dynamic, warm-hearted, enthusiastic, energetic. He was a man of deeds, not thoughts, a man determined to do “something striking and brilliant”.

Rosslyn Wemyss needed such men. He called Keyes in to his office. “Well, Roger, you have talked a hell of a lot about what ought to be done in the Dover area, and now you must go and do it,” Wemyss told the young admiral.

Keyes set about his task immediately. He turned night into day at Dover with elaborate series of searchlights, floodlights and pyrotechnics which illuminated the strait “from end to end as bright as Piccadilly”.

Every imaginable vessel was pressed into service, ploughing the waters between Dover and Calais. The concentrated barrage worked – to a point; U-boat losses rose, but not dramatically... and not dramatically enough for Roger Keyes.

There was an obvious solution: block Zeebrugge and Ostend. Reginald Bacon had dismissed the idea as sheer folly; “dumping down ships” would not bottle up either port.

Keyes and his staff disagreed. As February 1918 drew to a close, their plans were ready – and they were elaborate: an old cruiser, *Vindictive*, would charge the Mole and disgorge a 900-strong storming party; submarines packed with explosives

would smash into the railway viaduct which linked the Mole with the shore and blow it up, cutting off the defenders and preventing reinforcements arriving.

The attack on the Mole was elaborate, but it was also a diversion.

The Zeebrugge raid would rise or fall on whether the *Unterseebootsflotille Flanders* was corked in its bottle.

While fighting raged on the Mole, three blockships would charge around its tip, head for the canal entrance at full speed, then scuttle themselves.

It was a plan, Roger Keyes believed, which was redolent of success. But if it miscarried?

“If it fails, it will be better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all,” the admiral argued.

It would not fail, for Keyes would see to it that the preparations were elaborate.

Extra guns were crammed aboard the obsolete cruiser *Vindictive*: 11in and 7.5in howitzers, mortars, machine-guns in the foretop, plus a handful of pom-poms. The broadsides from this imposing arsenal would silence any foe on the Mole – but if a didn't, there was a wall of protective steel which grew around most of the upper deck.

An artificial wall of fog would hide her approach to the Mole. Ships in the attacking force were fitted with elaborate devices: powerful fans would blow a chemical – and rather pungent – concoction towards the shore, cloaking the force.

Of course, no kindly German would allow *Vindictive* to come alongside the Mole and none would certainly help her berth. The solution was ingenious. Two huge grappling hooks were fixed to derricks fore and aft. The derricks would swing out over the Mole wall, the hooks – “like gigantic fish hooks five feet long” – would lower and dig into the concrete structure, fixing *Vindictive* in place.

Eighteen boarding gangways barely two feet wide would then bridge the gap between the ship and the Mole. The assaulting troops would scurry across then climb down a 20ft parapet and attack their

allotted targets.

If the grappnels were inadequate, *Vindictive* had an ace up her sleeve; two Mersey ferries, *Iris* and *Daffodil*, were hastily requisitioned, the prefix ‘HMS’ added – plus grappling hooks, steel plate, guns and other military kit. Like *Vindictive*, the two boats were expected to deposit troops on to the Mole. But if all else failed, they could push the cruiser against the Mole to hold her in place.

Once the storming parties were ashore, they were certain to face a strong garrison of German naval infantry – the *Marinekorps Flanders* – and reinforcements would surely rush from the shore along the pier to bolster the defence. To stop them, Keyes proposed ramming two old submarines, C1 and C3, into the wooden and metal viaduct which linked the Mole with the mainland, then exploding the craft.

All this would provide sufficient distraction to occupy the defenders while the blockships rounded the tip of the Mole.

The cork in the Zeebrugge bottle came in the form of three obsolete cruisers with a combined age of more than 80 – *Thetis*, *Iphigenia* and *Intrepid*. The trio were expected to rush the narrow canal entrance then sink themselves at an angle, before their sailors abandoned ship and fled. Only single men could volunteer to crew these venerable vessels, Roger Keyes decreed. The war had created enough widows already without the need to offer more husbands for Death's ravenous appetite.

‘REAL DANGER’

‘A GOOD HAMMERING’

ELABORATE PREPARATIONS

Throughout February and March dockyard workers in the Garden of England prepared the assault ships for their dangerous charge. As they did, men who had put their names forward for an “undertaking of real danger” began to arrive at Chatham.

They found strange forms taking shape in the naval base. *Vindictive* bore little relation to the cruiser of old. A succession of narrow gangways were swung out along one side of the ship, held in place by a lattice of wires and chains, while the fighting top had turned into a steel dumpling. There were additional guns, demolition parties, flamethrowers. “Every mortal form of frightfulness” had been welded or fixed to the old hull, Surgeon G F Abercrombie observed.

There was no denying that *Vindictive* was ugly, Able Seaman W Wainwright conceded. “a veritable floating fortress, a death trap fitted with all the ingenious contrivances of war that the human brain could think of.

“We took unholy pride and a fiendish delight in her and if it were possible for men to love a ship, we loved her.”

To engineer Lt Cdr Ronald Boddie, *Vindictive* “looked more like a Christmas tree than a cruiser.” Boddie was assigned to the lead blockship, *HMS Thetis*.

If there was the whiff of death and glory about *Vindictive*, there was merely the whiff of death about the three antiquated cruisers picked to plug the canal entrance. The skeleton crews who volunteered for them were certainly disappointed; just days before they had served in the queens of the seas, the dreadnoughts of the Grand Fleet. Worse was to come. Leave was cancelled and they were told nothing of their mission. Unsurprisingly, they grumbled and grouched.

Most men did not yet know what

Continued on page ii



● ‘Magnificent and the soul of war’... (left) Royal Marines and bluejackets storm the Mole at Zeebrugge with HMS Vindictive alongside as depicted by a diorama at the Royal Marines Museum

Continued from page i

their “undertaking of real danger” would be. Only a select band had been informed of the mission, and Roger Keyes left them in no doubt as to its danger. The storming parties on the Mole would give the Hun “a good hammering”, he explained to officers assembled on March 2. Keyes was, Ronald Boddie remembered, “less sanguine” about the men in the blockships.

Two fates awaited them: death or a German prison camp, although “every endeavour,” the vice admiral assured them, would be made to rescue these volunteers. Any officer could drop out of the operation, Keyes continued; there would be no black mark against their name. No man stepped forward.

Apprised of their mission, the officers now sat down to plan the minutiae of the raid. William Bury, Vindictive’s engineer officer, crafted a detailed model of the Mole and harbour from plasticine. Aerial photographs were handed out. The men studied every detail. They were asked to sketch specific sections.

By the time the raid came, Royal Marines platoon sergeant Harry Wright was convinced “the officers and NCOs could have walked from one end of the Mole to the other blindfolded”.

Wright was a Royal Marine through-and-through. He had more than a decade’s experience to call upon, from skirmishes in Africa to the battle of matériel on the Western Front. Now his 10 Platoon would be the first ashore at Zeebrugge, charging 200 yards down the Mole to seize a strongpoint while his Devonian comrades charged in the opposite direction to knock out a four-gun emplacement.

Wright carried around 60lb of kit: a SMLE rifle with 60 rounds of ammunition and Mills bombs – the pineapple-shaped grenades which had become the mainstay of the British infantryman. He wore a steel helmet, gas mask and a lifejacket beneath his tunics. If it came to hand-to-hand combat, he would wield a ‘stunning mallet’; officers were rather more refined; they brandished revolvers and strode with walking sticks weighted with lead at one end.

A Lewis machine-gun crew was attached to every platoon, as was a flamethrower. There were dedicated platoons of demolition teams, sailors armed with gun cotton, fuses and detonators. There was a signal platoon, and a team of heavy machine-gunners.

The men drilled, kept fit, were subjected to talks and lectures. Marines from Plymouth fixed white triangular patches to their shoulders; a white circle identified their Portsmouth comrades; men from Chatham wore a white diamond. The bayonet was their friend, rifles, machine-guns and Mills bombs were weapons of last resort.

As far as Harry Wright was concerned, the planning for the operation was meticulous. “Every man knew exactly

what to do and where to go.” Many of his comrades were slightly more wary. AB Wainwright chewed over “the sheer audacity of tackling a place like Zeebrugge under the muzzles of the world-famed *Blankenberghe* Battery. The magnitude of the scheme overwhelmed us.”

Royal Marine James Feeney and his mates contemplated the task ahead of them on the Mole. “The general opinion here at the moment is that it will be either completely successful or we shall be all wiped out,” he wrote.

A FALSE START

‘HAVE PATIENCE, MEN’

With the preparations complete, Roger Keyes waited for tide, moon and wind to conspire in his favour. April 1918 began badly. Winds were strong, the Channel was choppy. But on Thursday 11, the former weakened, the latter calmed somewhat and Keyes gave the order to sail. In the afternoon and early evening, ships weighed anchor and slipped their moorings and headed for the Belgian coast.

Shortly before midnight, the guns of monitors Erebus and Terror opened up against targets in Zeebrugge. A twin-engined Handley Page heavy bomber dropped several sticks of 112lb bombs over Zeebrugge. German searchlights tried to catch the lumbering giant in their beams. They failed, but engine trouble dogged the aircraft. It plunged into the North Sea off Ostend.

As the bomber plummeted, so the wind too dropped, then picked up again – but in the opposite direction. Now it was blowing *out* to sea.

With barely an hour to go to the target, with all the preliminaries in place, with all the men fired up, Roger Keyes was faced with an agonising decision: to charge the Mole without his sheath of smoke, or return to England’s shores.

The wirelesses crackled. The signalling lamps flashed briefly in the night: N U R S L I N G – return to base.

As their admiral had feared, the men were downhearted as the force arrived back in British ports the next morning. Keyes realised they needed rousing. He strode aboard the Vindictive, gathered every man on the quarterdeck, and mounted a capstan to address them.

The men were cold, almost hostile, their eyes fixed upon him. He had promised them they would partake in a great enterprise “not a heroic disaster”. But the wind had changed direction. The Hun, too, knew something was brewing. “Had we attempted to land last night, it may easily have proved a disaster,” he told the gathered sailors and marines. The Royal Navy would return to Zeebrugge, however, the admiral assured them. “Have patience, men. I can promise you a successful operation.” With that, Roger Keyes departed. The men gave a rousing cheer.

It would be three weeks before tide and moon aligned once more in the Royal Navy’s favour. It was too long to wait. The tide would be favourable in ten days. The moon would not. It would be full.

The marines kicked their heels.

Leave was still cancelled. Communication with the outside world was forbidden. They were cooped up on the pre-dreadnought HMS Hindustan, turned into a floating barracks until the assault was unleashed.

The men played football, practised their drill, removed toe plates and heels from their boots to give them better grip on the concrete base of the Mole. They attended Sunday prayers where their chaplain talked about the fate of the dead. All these activities and more did little to ease the tension.

A NEW DAWN RISES

‘ST GEORGE FOR ENGLAND’

TWISTING THE DRAGON’S TAIL

Chief Stoker Alfred Sago, a 41-year-old East Anglian arrived at HMS Pembroke in Chatham on Monday April 22 1918. It was his seventh draft to the Kentish naval base in his 22 years’ service. It would be his last. And his shortest. He joined HMS Vindictive immediately.

Monday April 22 was also the first new date with a favourable high tide. The weather in Dover was not especially good, but it was rather better along the Flanders coast. At 10.45am Keyes’ yeoman hoisted the signal flags: NASCENT. The raid was on.

James Feeney packed his bags, stowed his hammock, grabbed his mess tin and all the bread, sugar and tea he could find in the mess and filed aboard Vindictive with his comrades. “We are doubtful that it will come off, but we all hope it will,” he noted in his diary.

Roger Keyes strolled down to the harbour in Dover with his wife. “Tomorrow is St George’s Day,” she reminded him as he prepared to join his command ship, the modern, fast destroyer HMS Warwick. “It is sure to be the best day for our enterprise. St George can be trusted to bring good fortune to England.”

The vice admiral agreed. As HMS Warwick steamed into the dusk of a spring night, leading a fleet of more than 50 warships, her signallers flashed a pithy message to HMS Vindictive: S A I N T G E O R G E F O R E N G L A N D .

The lamps on Vindictive flickered through the growing gloom: M A Y W E G I V E T H E D R A G O N S T A I L A D A M N E D G O O D T W I S T .

And perhaps they would. The wind was favourable. It was still favourable at nightfall. Around 10 pm, the rum was handed out. There would be no double measures; what was left when each man had downed his tot was emptied down the scupper.

Some men talked, some played cards, some were lost in quiet contemplation, and some, like James Feeney, grabbed a fitful sleep. “I hope it won’t be my last short one on this planet,” he recorded in his journal.

As the force closed in on the Belgian coast, the bugles sounded. Hot chicken

broth was served to each man before they began to fall in on Vindictive’s upper deck.

The marines loaded their rifles and fixed bayonets. “Our nerves were taut – almost to breaking point,” he recalled. The men talked in whispers, barely audible above the noise of Vindictive’s propellers driving the old ship through the North Sea.

Vizefeuerwerker (deputy ordnance technician) Schröder made his rounds of the *Friedrichsort* coastal battery as he did every night.

The four 28cm guns pointed out to sea, guarding the eastern approaches to Zeebrugge harbour as they always did. And as always, it was a quiet night on Flanders’ coast. Just after midnight – still 11pm on the twenty-second for the British – Schröder returned to his dugout. Barely had he sat down than the bunker shook. *An air raid*, he thought. He quickly corrected himself. *A bombardment*. There was the dull rumble of gunfire at sea, followed by the crash of shells landing ashore. The guns of Terror and Erebus had opened fire.

The impact of the shells tossed men out of their bunks in the dugouts which served the guns. Huge fountains of earth rose above the meadow to the rear, showering the area with soil. But the battery itself remained resolutely intact.

There were still several minutes to go before the task group pounced on Zeebrugge.

It fell to a swarm of small boats – motor launches and coastal motor boats – to wrap the attacking force in a blanket of artificial fog. Some would add to general chaos and confusion at Zeebrugge by lobbing mortars on to the Mole or launching torpedoes at German shipping inside the harbour.

In 55ft CMB 22B, Lt John Annesley cast off from HMS Iphigenia, which had towed the motor boat across the Channel. In the engine room, chief motor mechanic Edward Turk, a mere 19, watched as the twin-screw petrol engines first whined, then hummed, then roared and the launch began to hurtle towards the port well in excess of 30kts.

Annesley’s orders were brief, unambiguous and almost suicidal: close to within 50 yards of the tip of the Mole and lay a smoke screen. Once accomplished CMB 22B would retire, then return to the harbour a few minutes later and throw up a second screen to hide the arrival of the blockships.

On deck, one of Annesley’s men twisted the nozzles on gas cylinders which fed into a strange funnel-shaped device. The chemical concoction mixed and a pungent, thick fog began to swirl around the motor boat. The rest of the fleet of small craft did likewise.

The defenders could not see anything. The cloud of the smokescreen and a light drizzle combined to create an impenetrable wall in the darkness. But they could *hear* something.

Even above the crack of guns, the crash of shells impacting, there was the constant drone of engines.

The noise grew louder, but the artificial fog continued to cloak the approaching force – that is until the wind, and fortune, changed directions.

‘THEY’VE SEEN US’

MURDEROUS HUN FIRE

FEARFUL CASUALTIES

Ronald Boddie brewed a cup of warm soup in a small wooden shack on Thetis’ deck the men labelled the ward room, then donned his duffel coat, grabbed his rucksack containing a brandy flask, lifejacket, pistol and whistle and stepped out on deck. A star shell gave light to the darkness, followed by another, then another.

The sight of the flares perturbed the marines crammed like sardines aboard HMS Vindictive. “They’ve seen us,” one Royal nudged his comrade. *They* had – and there were still 300 or so yards to go before Vindictive grappled with the Mole.

The flare was followed almost immediately by an almighty crash as the first shell smashed into Vindictive’s upper deck. The marines were packed together “as thick as bees”. The slaughter wrought by the German guns was indescribable. Pte Bill Scorey was thrown across the ship by the impact of an enemy shell, his tin helmet shattered, his rifle smashed. He was one of the lucky ones; his comrades were blown to bits. “The few minutes between the first shell and when we landed were the worst of the whole business,” flamethrower carrier William Gough remembered. “Our casualties were fearful.” Marine Ernie Clist counted a good 30 or 40 comrades laid flat on the deck, dead or wounded.

“Our ranks,” Harry Wright bitterly observed, “got thinner every moment.”

Vindictive’s exposed bridge had been surrounded by breast-high mattresses to soften the impact of shrapnel. There was nothing they could do in the face of a direct hit, however. Royal Marine Capt Arthur Chater urged his two superiors, Lt Col Bertram Elliot and Maj Alexander Corder, to keep their heads down. A veteran of Antwerp and Gallipoli, Chater knew the hideous effects of modern firepower. His superiors ignored his advice. Suddenly, the colonel and the major dropped to the deck. Chater grabbed both bodies and tried to speak to them, but Elliot and Corder were dead.

Vindictive shielded Iris from the brunt of the enemy’s fire – as did the high Mole wall. As the converted ferry sailed past the old cruiser, Royal Marine L/Cpl George Calverley watched flames leap out of the funnel and flamethrowers belch sheaths of fire along the Mole. *This*, thought Calverley, *was what Dante’s Inferno must have been like*.

The German guns were relentless, merciless. “Every man was serving the guns, dripping with sweat, covered in powder marks – everybody from the battery commander to the youngest sailor,” *Artilleriemaat* (gunner’s mate)

Richard Policke recalled. Tonight, there were no ranks, no officers and men, only gunners.

The suicidal charge expected of the coastal motor boats was turning out to be just that. German guns at the end of the Mole had not been neutralised by Vindictive, nor did the elaborate smoke screen offer any protection. Speed and skill were the only allies of the small, fast craft as they weaved about in the dark. Every one of Annesley’s handful of crew was injured; Edward Turk was struck in the face, his left eye wounded by German shell fire. Yet his boat continued to run – and to defy the Hun – thanks to the combined efforts of all of his sailors.

ON THE MOLE

MARINES DECIMATED

‘WE ARE ALL EQUAL NOW’

St George’s Day was barely 60 seconds old as HMS Vindictive crashed against the Mole, several hundred yards nearer shore than she should have done, peppered by enemy fire. Her captain, Alfred Carpenter, struggled to control his ship which bucked and rolled violently. He had lost perhaps half his ship’s company and storming party already. All but two of his boarding ramps had been shot away. His elaborate flamethrower had been disabled.

His anchors struggled to dig into the seabed. When one did, the cruiser careered wildly until Carpenter brought her alongside the Mole again.

The anchor at least worked; the grappling hooks did not. They simply would not grasp the concrete and hold Vindictive firmly in place.

Only HMS Daffodil saved the day. With every ounce of pressure squeezed out of her engines, the hurriedly-converted ferry pushed the cruiser against the Mole and struggled to hold her there.

The two remaining gangways crashed on to the Mole wall. For 15 minutes, Vindictive had born the brunt of the enemy’s wrath. “We are just going over the top,” one marine cried. “We are all equal now.”

Harry Wright and his platoon scrambled over dead bodies and the mangled upper deck, then along the precarious walkway, before leaping on to the Mole wall which was raked with machine-gun fire.

The marines hurriedly lowered their assault ladders and dropped the 20 or so feet on to the floor of the Mole. Of the 45 men in Harry Wright’s platoon, there were now just 12 left.

Still they stuck to their task. Terror had given way to anger. They were determined to avenge the deaths of so many of their comrades. Hatred etched on their faces, rifles gripped in their hands, they charged the 200 yards along the pier as planned, prepared to thrust the cold steel of their bayonets into the first German they could find. But the Germans had gone. The emplacement Wright’s platoon had been ordered to storm was empty.



● *The gap blown in the viaduct by the destruction of submarine HMS C3*



And then it was as though Heaven came to meet Earth in one momentary upheaval... C3 and the viaduct were no more. Great chunks of masonry fell in the water all around us. The boat rocked and swayed as though possessed. Flames shot up to a tremendous height. In their glare was visible a great break in the Mole...

— LS William Cleaver, HMS C3

Sailor William Gough had been ordered to destroy any opposition he found in a shed on the Mole. The shed no longer existed. Its four walls stood, but the building was burned out, its occupants dead or gone.

But on the inner Mole wall, a German destroyer rode up and down with the swell, all its guns blazing away at the attackers storming the pier. Gough directed his flamethrower at them. The mixture of fuel oil and petrol ignited as it shot out of the nozzle, spraying a sheet of flame almost 100ft long. Gough raked the upper deck of the warship until the fuel cylinder was empty, then dumped his useless weapon and headed back to his ship.

Despite their terrible losses, at least some of Vindictive's raiding party had forced their way ashore. HMS Iris' assault troops were still stuck aboard the converted ferry.

The swell carried the small ship up and down violently. Lt Cdr George Bradford scrambled up the grappling anchor in a bid to get it to hook into the Mole wall, while the marines desperately tried to keep the scaling ladders in position.

Bradford came from a family of heroes. One brother had earned the DSO, a second a posthumous Military Cross, a third, Roland, a VC on the Somme before he was later killed in action. George Bradford shared his brothers' defining trait: selfless sacrifice. He managed to fix the grappling hook to the Mole wall. He was shot almost immediately, falling into the sea. A shipmate dived in after him. He too died.

At the same time, a naval lieutenant, Claude Hawkings, scurried up a scaling ladder, then jumped on to the Mole. None of his shipmates followed him. As Hawkings turned to fix the ladder to the wall he fell, like Bradford, to a hail of machine-gun bullets.

The hook which cost George Bradford his life – and subsequently earned him the VC – bent and broke away from the Mole wall as Iris fell with the swell.

There was no hope of Iris' men storming the Mole directly. Her captain, Cdr Valentine Gibbs, brought his ship alongside Vindictive. His men would have to fight their way over the cruiser's dead and wounded to get ashore.

A TOWER OF FLAME

‘VERY LAST WORD IN NOISE’

HMS C3 had so far escaped most of the enemy's fire. The obsolete submarine had parted company with the destroyer which had towed her across the Channel almost an hour before.

Now Lt Richard Sandford – ‘Uncle Baldy’ to his men, a nickname earned by his slightly old-fashioned manner and

receding hairline despite his 26 years – charged his boat “at full tilt” towards the viaduct at the foot of the Mole. His five crew held on to the bridge rails for dear life as the beams of searchlights held the small submarine in their grasp. C3 began to draw ineffective fire, but at 9kts, the submarine clattered into the wood and steel girders of the bridge with “a good jolt”. The submariners climbed into a skiff while Sandford lit the fuse to the five tons of Amatol which would vaporise the old boat in a matter of minutes.

“Come on, sir,” his comrades exerted as the initially-stunned German defenders began to pour fire down from viaduct. The officer joined his men, who rowed furiously away from C3, showered constantly by German fire. “They couldn't hit a pussy cat,” Sandford sneered. But they could. He was hit in the leg, so too a young seaman. A petty officer was also wounded. The skiff was riddled and began to take on water. “And then it was as though Heaven came to meet Earth in one momentary upheaval,” recalled LS William Cleaver.

C3 simply ceased to exist. Chunks of viaduct and submarine flew up to 800 yards. A gap 70ft wide and 200ft long had been blown in the bridge. The defenders of the Mole were cut off from the mainland.

Aboard HMS Vindictive there was a huge cheer. “Up went a huge tower of flame and debris and bodies into the black sky!” Capt Carpenter recalled. “I never saw such a column of flame! It seemed a mile high!” To Pte James Feeney, who had just blown up a railway shed with grenades, the explosion of C3 was “the very last word in noise”.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

ENTER THE BLOCKSHIPS

Ronald Boddie had watched the battle from afar. It had been strangely mesmerising. But now it was Thetis' hour. He clambered down to the aged cruiser's engine room where he found his stokers “merry and bright”. Thetis was still plodding along at seven knots. The telephone rang. It was Thetis' captain Cdr Ralph Sneyd. The ship had been illuminated by star

shell, but motorboats were doing their best to shield the blockship behind a wall of artificial fog.

Boddie looked at the faces of his shipmates. They were nervous, but tried to hide their fear by smoking furiously. They stoked the fires far more urgently than the ship's speed demanded.

The telegraph rang. *Full ahead.* Thetis gathered speed. The engines crashed and banged. The men's fear turned to exhilaration. Boiling water gushed out of the piston rods and the venerable cruiser sliced through the North Sea at 16kts.

The men of the *Friedrichsort* battery were firing blindly. They could make out nothing amid the smoke and swirl of battle. They aimed their guns at the end of the Mole and fired repeatedly.

Suddenly, out of the fog and smoke, came HMS Thetis. *Vizefeuerwerker* Schröder watched as the German guns scored hit after hit on the lumbering warship. “Suddenly a huge column of smoke and steam shot out of the ship and completely enveloped it.”

The noise of Thetis' engines drowned out the noise of battle. Ronald Boddie had no idea what was happening to his ship. His stokers had given their all. So too, it seemed, had the ship's engines.

First the starboard engine failed, then the port. Steam and hot water gushed from every outlet.

Boddie telephoned the bridge. The line was dead. He sent a runner. The man never returned. Everyone topside must be dead, the engineer reasoned, and ordered his men to open the seacocks and abandon ship.

As Thetis' crew gathered on the quarterdeck, a sailor found Boddie. The captain was alive – and he wanted his ship to sail on.

Ronald Boddie returned whence he had came. The North Sea was now roaring into the engine room, but there was still time to close the cocks.

For what it was worth, Boddie and his men grappled with the engines. To their astonishment, the machines struggled into life. Thetis lurched for another half mile before finally running aground.



● *‘They could be relied upon to tackle any situation’... Senior rates from the Coastal Motor Boats and Motor Launches. Edward Turk of CMB 22B is on the far left*

aft funnel was smashed. Her boilers exploded. A few hundred yards off the Mole, she ground to a halt... but the German guns did not.

Destroyer HMS Phoebe tried to come to North Star's rescue. A line was tossed to the stricken warship and Phoebe attempted to pull her to safety. The line snapped. Now Phoebe decided to go alongside North Star to take her men off as her captain reluctantly realised his ship was beyond saving.

The German guns now blasted both ships. Phoebe's funnels were partly shot away. Her crew began to help North Star's survivors aboard.

“Men began to scramble across the gap between the two ships,” recalled Telegraphist Vernon Mogg of Phoebe. “Some slipped and fell between. Some were able to get back, but others had a difficult job as the water was covered with an oily slime.” Phoebe lowered her boats. Riddled with bullets and shell holes, they sank. Ropes were cast over the side and North Star's crew struggled up them.

With all the survivors aboard, Phoebe began to break away. A figure was spotted on North Star's deck. Phoebe drew in again, her sailors urging the man to jump across. He stepped back, took a run up and attempted to leap the gap. At that very instant a shell exploded at his side. The jumping sailor vanished; he never made the deck of Phoebe.

THE FORCE DEPARTS

MARINES LEFT BEHIND

‘A HEAP OF DEAD AND DYING’

With the blockships' work done, the time had come for Vindictive to depart. On the cruiser's battered bridge, Capt Carpenter gave the order to sound the signal to retire: K in Morse code, blasted by the ship's horn.

The horn, like so much on Vindictive, had fallen victim to the German guns. The order was passed to Daffodil. Her siren belched into life, but amid the tumult of battle it was barely, if at all, audible. It fell to men to improvise: runners and hand signals spread the word along the Mole.

Pte James Feeney and 15 comrades scurried down the Mole two at a time “running the gauntlet” over concrete swept by a machine-gun fire.

He climbed the ladder to the top of the wall, then down the gangway on the opposite side. Vindictive was heaving violently up and down – and the enemy was still pouring a hail of fire upon her. He jumped over the boarding ramp and dashed to the starboard side where some protection was afforded the men.

“It was terrible here,” he recalled. Seeing the dead and listening to the dying made him feel sick. He cast off his kit, removed his gas mask and sat down next to Cpl ‘Tubby’ Smith. “He had one leg clean knocked off – and was talking bravely,” Feeney remembered. Twenty-nine-year-old Tubby Smith died within the hour. He was one of five Smiths to die that night on Flanders' coast.

Sgt Harry Wright heard the signal to retire. But in the chaos of battle orders became counter-orders. He and 11 comrades now watched as Vindictive began to move away from the Mole. Perhaps she might return. Perhaps motor boats might come to the men's rescue. The marines climbed the Mole wall, cast their equipment and life jackets into the sea and lay down, pretending to be dead.

George Calverley clambered down

the wide staircase which led to Iris' lower deck. “The worst is over,” a comrade assured him “Now it's a matter of getting home. Where are the others?” The man gasped slightly, then fell forward. Calverley bent down to catch him. The next thing he knew, he was 15ft away, lying on his side. Slowly his hearing returned. He struggled to move his legs before slowly standing up. All around was the sound of moaning, crying men. Where he had been standing at the foot of the staircase “was a heap of dead and dying”. He did what he could for his comrades “which was very little” he lamented, for the injuries were too grave and the means for dealing with them too inadequate.

The scenes on Iris were repeated – with interest – aboard HMS Vindictive. “I shall never forget the sight of the mess decks,” James Feeney recalled. “Dead and dying lying on the decks and tables where, but a few hours before, they ate, drank and played cards. In the light of day it was a shambles.” To Feeney, success or failure, Zeebrugge had “cost a great deal of blood”.

Arthur Chater felt nothing but failure. He sat down with Edward Bamford. Both men shared the same feeling. “We had lost many good men with what seemed to us no result,” Chater lamented. Consumed totally by the bitter fighting on the Mole, neither officer knew that the blockships had reached their objectives.

Ronald Boddie slumped down in the wardroom pantry of a motor launch, next to his captain Ralph Sneyd – now a captain without a ship.

Sneyd had been shot in both legs and in one heel. His clothes were still soaked after falling into the harbour. He passed the engineer a saucepan, filled with vomit. After the experience they had gone through, Sneyd urged, every man should fill it.

Other survivors of the blockships were eventually transferred to HMS Warwick. Provision for the wounded was woefully inadequate. Medics bandaged wounds, handed out morphine, blankets. Roger Keyes toured the mess decks and spoke to each wounded man, assuring them “that their work had been the finest thing in history.”

Playing dead, Harry Wright lay on the Mole for two hours, listening to the clatter of machine-guns, watching star shells dance in the April night.

It was approaching dawn when the defenders of Zeebrugge began moving along the Mole to round up stragglers and clear up the dead.

A few Germans crouched down to begin searching the bodies of Wright and his comrades. The marines twitched. The Germans leaped back. Their officer stepped forward. “The game's up, lads,” he said in remarkably good English. “Play the game and we will play the game with you. Lay down your arms and put your hands up and we will not harm you.”

With dawn the true horrors of the devastation aboard HMS Iris became obvious to Royal Marine George Calverley. He found the body of her captain, Valentine Gibbs, both his legs shot away.

Of six Royal Marine officers, three were dead, two were wounded and a sixth

Continued on page iv





NAVY NEWS

Off-sale date: May 1, 2008

APRIL 2008

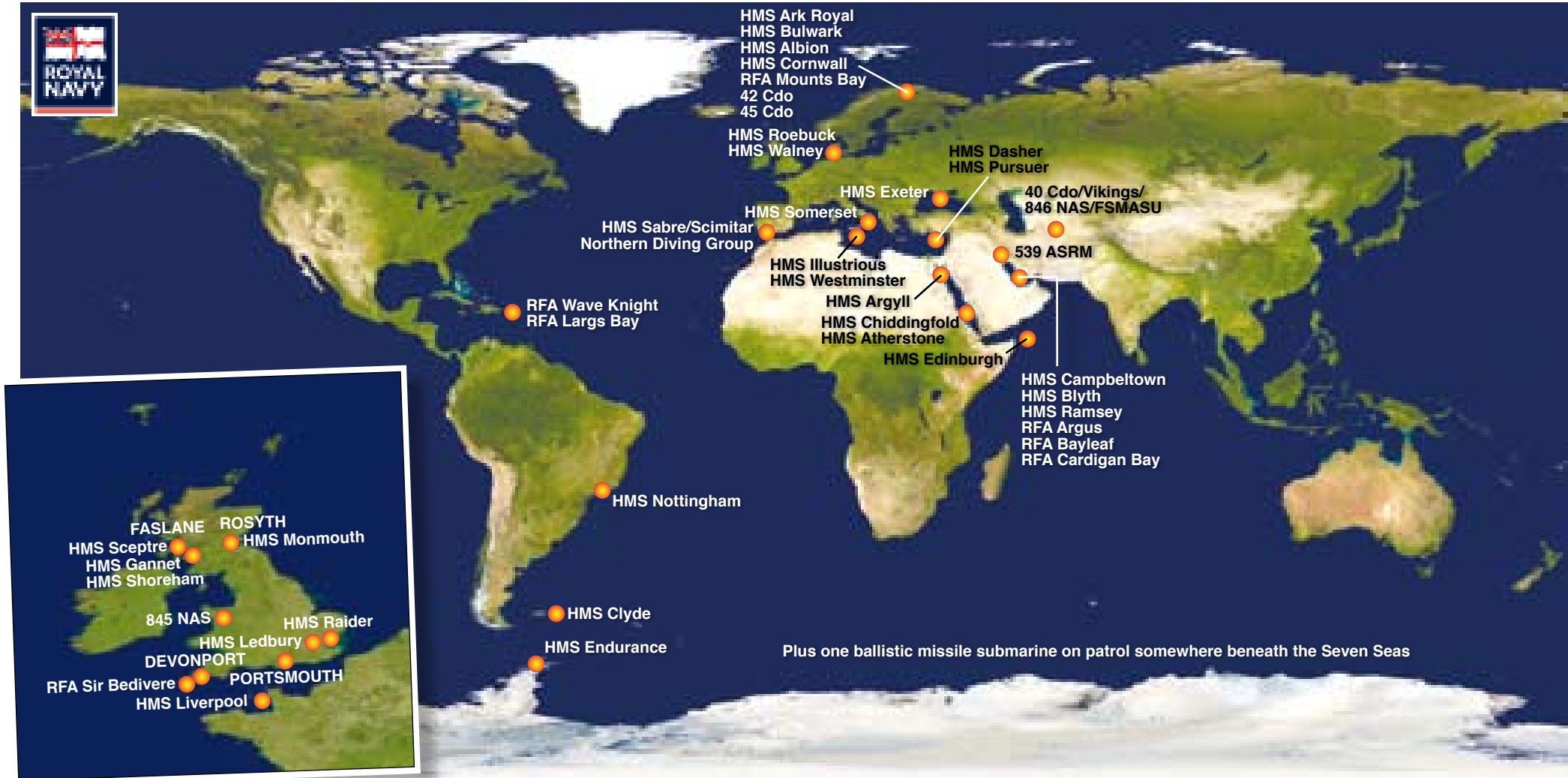
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THE Merlin of the 'capital ship', HMS Westminster, prepares for another sortie during the frigate's Orion 08 deployment. The Type 23 warship is providing anti-submarine escort for the task group, led by flagship HMS Illustrious, but has also demonstrated her prowess in downing threats in the air courtesy of her Seawolf missiles. *Turn to pages 10 and 11 for more from the task group.*

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU (East)



EYE OF THE HUNTER



Fleet Focus

PHEW. We're amazed we managed to squeeze everything on to our map this month.

Yes the public and press may care little, but the men and women of the Senior Service have been exceptionally busy this spring.

Their efforts seem to be split between extremes of temperature. We'll begin where it's cold.

A sizeable task force and Royal Marine presence could be found clustered around Narvik and Harstad for Armatura Borealis: HM Ships **Albion**, **Bulwark**, **Cornwall** and **Ark Royal**, plus **RFA Mounts Bay**, and the green berets of **42** and **45 Commandos** were all involved in the Allied winter war games (see pages 25-28).

Those war games fortuitously coincided with the discovery by the Norwegians of the wartime destroyer **HMS Hunter**, lost near Narvik in 1940. Sixty-eight years later, the British and Norwegian navies paid their respects to her (see page 23).

Ice and snow are not, of course, the preserve of the Northern Hemisphere. **HMS Endurance** welcomed Britain's second most senior naval officer who paid a rare visit to the ice survey ship on operations around Antarctica (see page 22).

A short distance (relatively speaking) away, destroyer **HMS Nottingham** popped to South Georgia before heading to the warmth of Rio (see pages 8-9).

It can be cold in Scotland too (despite what we said in these pages a couple of months ago) as we found on a visit to Britain's No.1 Search And Rescue unit, **HMS Gannet** (see pages 16 and 17). Gannet's Sea Kings were also called upon during a joint exercise with **HMS Shoreham**, which was paying a visit to nearby Ayr (see page 4).

Minehunter **HMS Walney** stepped into the shoes of **HMS Roebuck** on NATO duties in the Kattegat and Skagerrak (see right) and possibly wished she hadn't as storm after storm lashed her for the better part of a month.

Right, that's enough of the cold, time for the warmth. The RN is back in charge of **Combined Task Force 158** in the northern Gulf... to which **HMS Campbeltown** is attached. She's taken over from **HMS Argyll**, currently enjoying the Egyptian sun after a mammoth patrol aided by **RFA Argus** and **Bayleaf**. At the tip of the Gulf, **RFA Cardigan Bay** is training Iraqi sailors and marines, while **HMS Blyth** and **Ramsey** have been operating alongside the Kuwaitis and Americans. Turn to page 7 for a round-up of operations in and around the Gulf.

Gulf-bound is the Orion 08 task force. Flagship **HMS Illustrious** belatedly made it to Malta (see page 10), accompanied by frigate **HMS Westminster** which has been blasting away with her Seawolf missiles (see page 11). Destroyer **HMS Edinburgh** broke off from the task group to tackle piracy (see page 4) and also operating semi independently are **HMS Atherstone** and **Chiddingfold**; the latter paid her respects to one of the doyens of the RN clearance diving branch (see pages 4 and 23).

In the Med, **HMS Somerset** has been hunting submarines (with varying degrees of success - see page 5) while destroyer **HMS Exeter** enjoyed the high life in Monaco before being given a rare glimpse inside a former top secret Soviet submarine base in the Crimea (see page 6).

845 NAS are gearing up for Afghanistan courtesy of some training in Snowdonia (see page 13). They will be joining their Commando Helicopter Force comrades of **846 NAS** already in theatre.

About to leave Helmand are the Royals of **40 Commando**. They will do so after a particularly successful series of operations around the town of Sangin, now firmly wrestled from Taliban control (see pages 14-15).

And finally... our ship of the month is not **HMS Richmond** (which appeared twice in the space of 90 days - instead of ten years - thanks to an administrative *faux pas*) but the much smaller university training boat **HMS Raider** (see page 12).



Aal's well that ends well

IF THE sailors of HMS Walney were expecting a quiet winter, well they didn't get one.

With barely a week's notice, the Sandown-class warship was asked to stand in for HMS Roebuck on NATO duties in Norway and the Baltic for a month.

The Faslane-based mine countermeasures vessel was readying herself for impending Neptune Warrior war games and a package of pre-deployment training.

All those plans had to be thrown (temporarily) out of the window. The stores suddenly filled with cold weather clothing and the navigator clambered aboard clutching a bevy of charts of Norwegian waters.

He was followed by the command staff, who would direct the operations of NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1, which includes HMS Hurworth, over the weeks to come from their new flagship.

The task force had a fairly punishing schedule which waited for no man - irrespective of weather.

And if you think we've had a pretty rotten winter here in Blighty, well it's been far worse at sea... especially if you're a small minehunter.

The force was battered by an incessant procession of storms from which the fjords around Stavanger in Norway offered little protection.

Still it's not all been bad. As flagship of the NATO group, Walney hosted her fair share of cocktail parties and had the honour of leading the Allied warships into the Danish port of Aalborg.

The town welcomed the visiting sailors with open arms... and Walney learned that Aalborg was very much a 'sailors' town', not least thanks to one street which boasted 198 clubs, pubs and restaurants.

Suitably recovered from their exertions in Aalborg, the ships moved to Fredrikshavn for the Danish-led exercise Aut Batt, a cross between a mine hunt and a Thursday war (with surface and aerial attacks thrown at the force).

There was, sadly, little chance for either; inclement weather brought the curtain down on Aut Batt prematurely and the small ships returned to the sanctuary of port.

The good news about Aut Batt's demise, however, was that Walney could return to Faslane as Roebuck returned to the force to resume her flagship duties.

The bad news was that as soon as she sailed for home, she sailed into the teeth of a storm. Gusts battering the ship exceeded 50kts at times.

With the wind, the ship made 6kts more than her maximum speed but against it, as she rounded Cape Wrath, she lost 5kts.

After a three-day bruising, Walney sailed up the Clyde for home. Now alongside, it's off with the Norwegian and Danish charts and on with preparations for Neptune Warrior and pre-deployment training.



● *Thirtysomething...* Just days after her 30th birthday, hunter-killer submarine HMS Sceptre leaves Faslane bound for Loch Long to conduct trials.

The Barrow-built boat was commissioned on Valentine's Day 1978... that's 13 years before the youngest member of her ship's company came into this world. Actually, the average age of the crew is just one year older than Sceptre herself (the oldest deep aboard is 47).

All on board celebrated with a rather large cake (featuring, of course, the submariners' legendary dolphins crest) courtesy of the boat's catering department, chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)) Tinker, Marshall and PO Boyle.

Despite her longevity, the Swiftsure-class submarine has a couple more years of service left in her; she's due to pay off in 2010.

Picture: LLogs Stu Hill, FRPU Clyde



Red Rose on Merseybeat

IF MOHAMMED can't get to the mountain, well you know the rest.

Frigate HMS Lancaster can't squeeze down the Lune to get to her namesake town.

She can, however, quite easily navigate the Mersey, where she was met by various affiliates during a stop in Liverpool.

The Type 23 has spent much of 2008 on principal warfare officer training, which meant lots of air attacks, boarding operations and anti-submarine exercises.

So a visit to the European Capital of Culture (*cough*, splutter – *Mancunian Assistant Ed*) was a welcome reprieve from war.

The ship's football sides took on various local teams, and the frigate herself hosted players from Premiership side Everton.

Then it was back to war, this time more training on passage to the northern Spanish port of Vigo.

Joining the Red Rose for the crossing from Merseyside to Spain were fathers and sons of various members of the ship's company.

Luckily for them, the Bay of Biscay was in a rather forgiving mood.

Liverpool goes to Guernsey

AFTER two months being given a thorough test, you would have thought HMS Liverpool was sick of the sight of naval trainers.

And probably they were. But it didn't stop a team from the Flag Officer Sea Training joining the destroyer yet again.

Liverpool has already passed through Operational Sea Training – the 'MOT' from the Admiralty which permits a ship to head off on a front-line deployment.

But the FOST team wanted to scrutinise the Portsmouth warship's sea safety training before Liverpool heads to the South Atlantic to replace her sister Nottingham.

They did so not in FOST's traditional playground off Plymouth but in and around Guernsey, where Liverpool spent three days conducting exercises, hosting local dignitaries, and also explaining to Channel Island emergency planners what the RN could offer in the event of a disaster striking the area.

Piratical move by Edinburgh

HMS Edinburgh broke off from the rest of the Orion 08 task force (*see page 10*) to put the boot into pirates in the Indian Ocean.

The destroyer joined Combined Task Force 150, a group of Allied warships which sweeps the waters from the Arabian Sea to the Horn of Africa and beyond for illegal activities.

That mission (nor the heat) did not stop the ship's company running around the upper deck in aid of Sport Relief.

Sailors opted to run one, three or seven miles for the charity – which meant, in turn, seven, 21 or 49 circuits of the Type 42's main deck. Each runner paid £5 for the 'privilege' of taking part with more than £100 raised for the good cause.

Knight out in Fowey

THE last of the 'Knights of the Round Table', RFA Sir Bedivere, paid her final visit to Fowey before bowing out of service.

The landing support ship has enjoyed a short but sweet affiliation with the people of the Cornish port, with whom she has been bound since 2005.

Sir Bedivere arrived off the town after a year-long stint in the Gulf training Iraqi sailors and marines.

A wee bit warmer...

DESPITE what Crowded House said, you cannot always take the weather with you.

And for that, the men of the Northern Diving Group are eternally grateful.

They left Faslane behind to carry out training missions at depth – something feasible in Scotland, but the cold and murk of the lochs cannot compete with the Mediterranean.

The divers borrowed kit from the Gibraltar Clearance Diving Unit – permanently based at The Rock to provide security in the harbour and to check visiting warships.

Ordinarily, NDG is on call to deal with explosive ordnance along 8,000 miles of coastline north of an imaginary line drawn from Liverpool to Hull.

Gibraltar cannot offer quite as much coastline (divide by 1,000

and you get the idea), but it can offer sparkling blue waters, warmth and consistency.

"Gibraltar offers us fantastic opportunities to conduct training uninterrupted by the weather," explained Lt Cdr Andrew Ward, CO of the Northern Diving Group.

"With two weeks here, we can take advantage of excellent facilities and achieve a very high level of work-up."

LS(D) Gary Shaw put it more simply: "It's just nice to be actually diving in warmer waters for a wee change. There's been good camaraderie with the lads and the Gibraltar diving squadron as well."

● *Gibraltar-based AB(D) Richard Bailey shows the Scottish divers how it's done*

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East



Rich pickings for Chid

DON'T worry, they got it in the end. It's just that a deflated red blob floating in the Gulf of Aden makes a less interesting picture than a giant inflatable red blob floating in the Gulf of Aden.

This is a 'killer tomato', a target dropped by minehunter HMS Chiddingfold, being straddled by rounds from the warship's 30mm main gun.

The tomato was 'rolled out' to test her gunners' prowess as the warship entered waters where attacks by pirates and terrorists on shipping can take place.

The gunnery team, directed by Lt Jon Campbell, blasted away at the tomato which was eventually recovered in a rather sorry state.

Chiddingfold is sailing in company with her sister Atherstone and 'mother ship' RFA Diligence, which carries stores and supplies for the much smaller Hunts.

The trio form the minehunting element of the much larger Orion 08 deployment which is dispersed across the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.

■ Honouring Ginger's last wish, page 23



Something in the Ayr

TWO Scottish ports have been blessed by visits from Her Majesty's warships.

HMS Shoreham made the short hop along the Firth of Clyde from her home in Faslane to the seaside town of Ayr for a hospitality visit.

The Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessel spent a week in – and out – of the town conducting exercises, hosting locals and working on Search and Rescue and winching serials with a Sea King from HMS Gannet, based at Prestwick just outside Ayr.

The latter exercises were witnessed by students from Ayr Academy who were hosted for a day by Shoreham.

Others enjoying the mine countermeasures vessel's hospitality included the Sea Cadets of TS Mountbatten (Ayr), Gannet (Ardrossan), John Paul Jones (Stewarty) and Argyll (Irvine).

In keeping with the 'youth' theme, Shoreham hosted a careers' forum for head teachers and RN recruiters from across Ayrshire.

On the east coast, frigate HMS Monmouth was doing very much the same during a four-day spell at Ocean Terminal in Leith.

She also hosted a careers' forum and Sea Cadets – in this case TS Lochinvar (South Queensferry) – as well as members of the RNA from Edinburgh and West Lothian.

Also walking up the brow were new recruits from Edinburgh's RNR unit HMS Scotia and several hundred tourists (not at the same time, admittedly) who took advantage of an open afternoon.

From Leith, Monmouth headed to Cardiff so her ship's company could call in on their affiliated town and exercise their freedom of it for the first time.

The Black Duke has enjoyed the freedom of Monmouth for the past six years, but this was the first time her ship's company had exercised that right.

Seventy-five of them paraded through the county town during the five-day visit to Wales – a visit which found the country, and its capital especially, in festive mood as it coincided with the rugby union team's triumph in the Six Nations.

Modern life is rubbish

HELICOPTER carrier HMS Ocean is paving the way for the flat-tops of the future thanks to a revolutionary waste disposal system.

Ocean is in the latter stages of a year-long overhaul by Babcock Marine in Devonport.

Much of that revamp focuses on making the assault ship leaner and meaner.

But some of the work involves making Ocean kinder to the environment.

One such piece of kit (it's not big, but it is clever) is the pyrolysis waste disposal system – it basically turns gash into ash which saves space on the ship and is in line with the MOD's modern waste management thinking.

Ocean is the first RN vessel to receive this bit of waste wizardry; the same technology will be used in the next-generation carriers in a decade's time.

Other improvements to the 21,000-ton vessel – Britain's largest warship – include overhauling her machinery and engines, giving the living spaces a makeover, better comms kit, better aviation facilities to support Apache attack helicopters, more space to house the Royal Marines' equipment, more room for food storage and a re-built galley (which entailed, *inter alia*, replacing 25,000 ceramic tiles).

The work is due to be completed in August when Ocean returns to sea to conduct trials.

● *HMS Somerset with elements of the NATO force in Albania. Next to her are Greece's HS Hydra (F452) and Turkey's TCG Zafer (F253)*

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher



Best laid plans

BUMMER. You're all set to go hunting submarines and then your sonar packs up. And so the hunter becomes the hunted...

The game of cat and mouse between frigate and submarine saw the balance tip decidedly in the mouse's favour as HMS Somerset exercised with a NATO task force off the east coast of Sicily.

The software which drives the world's best anti-submarine sonar, 2087, crashed.

Luckily, however, Somerset has more than

one way to skin a, er, mouse, and used her hull-mounted sonar rather than her towed array to go in search of her prey – then send the ship's Lynx helicopter, Duke, in for the kill.

An excellent Plan B. Except that Duke joined 2087 on the 'out of order' list.

Time for Plan C. Track the boat with your hull sonar, fire torpedoes at maximum range, then run like hell and fire decoys in a bid to escape the torpedoes the submarine has just fired.

Plan C, you will be relieved to hear, worked, although as Somerset's CO Cdr Rob Wilson admits, the frigate rather pushed her luck.

Thanks to some top engineering work both Duke and Sonar 2087 were quickly fixed by the ship's team, giving Somerset a definite advantage over her unnamed prey as Exercise Noble Manta progressed.

The results were outstanding: the prey was held at bay far outside the maximum range of its

weaponry, allowing Duke to move in for the kill.

"This exciting sonar equipment has the potential to change the rules of this deadly game, handing the initiative back to the warship from the submarine," said Cdr Wilson.

Somerset is attached to the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 which prowls the Mediterranean for illegal shipping and terrorist activity and is currently commanded by Turkey's Rear Admiral Ertugrul.

● *A computer graphic of a Joint Strike Fighter on final approach to HMS Queen Elizabeth*

Picture: Thales



Carriers' steel deal struck

MORE multi-million-pound orders have been placed for the 'jigsaw' which will eventually make up the Navy's future carriers.

Eighty thousand tons of steel which will form the hulls of HM Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales will be supplied by works across the UK, with a small amount coming from the continent, at a cost of £65m.

Defence procurement minister Baroness Taylor also announced three smaller contracts, worth around £8m, for machinery and infrastructure to fit out the two 65,000-ton flat-tops.

Fife firm Brand Rex has won the £3m contract to provide optical cabling – which will carry reams of data between complex computer systems – for the sisters.

Rochdale-based Salt Separation Services has been given £1m to provide reverse osmosis plants for both ships; the plants will be capable of producing 500 tons of fresh water for the ship's company every day.

And Fluid Transfer International in Gloucestershire won the £4m contract for kit to fuel and 'de-fuel' the ships' mix of JSF fast jets and helicopters.

As for the steel, Corus (the successor to British Steel) with its sites in Scunthorpe, Motherwell and Teesside, and Dent Steel Services in Bradford will provide more than nine-tenths of the steel plates and bulb flats.

According to the boffins, the steel ordered is equivalent to the quantity needed to build Heathrow's

new Terminal 5 or sufficient to re-build Wembley Stadium three times over.

The ships will be built in segments, like the Type 45 destroyers, at yards in Glasgow, Barrow and Portsmouth, with the pieces of the jigsaw fitted together in Rosyth.

There's progress on the carrier escort front, too.

HMS Duncan is no longer just a name on paper as the sixth of Britain's future destroyer fleet begins to slowly take shape after the first steel was cut on her.

Baroness Taylor and BAE Systems Scott Ballingall performed the honours at BAE's Govan yard on the Clyde, where four of Duncan's sisters have been or are being built.

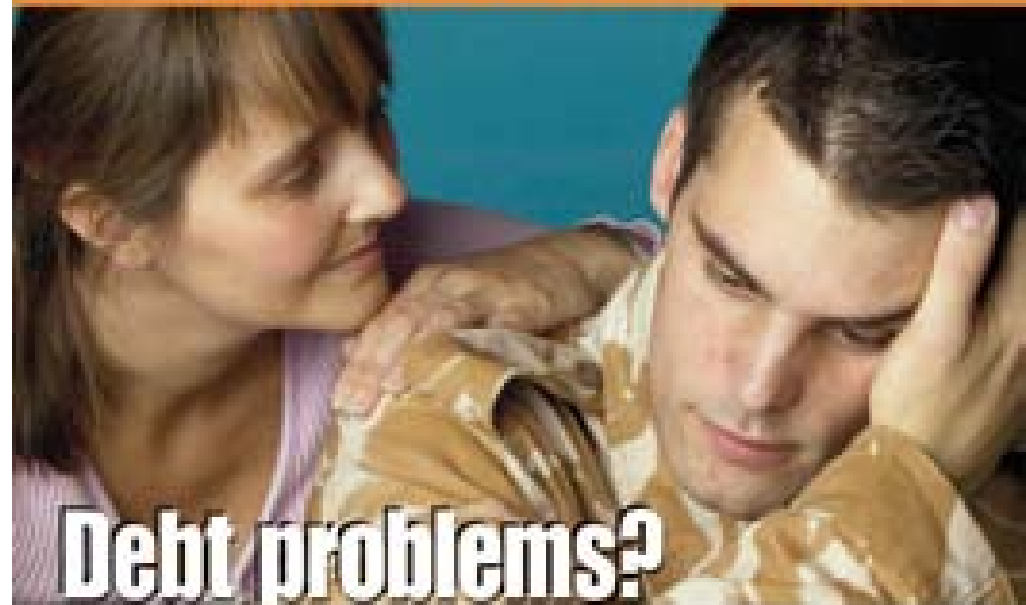
The Type 45s are hailed as the world's most advanced air defence destroyer and will shield the fleet from missile and air attack well into the 21st Century.

Around 3,600 shipwrights, carpenters and electricians are working on the destroyers at BAE's two yards on the Clyde, as well as the VT Group's facility in Portsmouth where the bows and main masts are being built.

Duncan won't see active service until next decade; the oldest of her sisters, Daring, is less than two years away from joining the Fleet.

HMS Daring is gearing up to resume sea trials later this spring. Tests during her first spell at sea last summer around the Firth of Clyde exceeded expectations.

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Dee's death leaves 'a big void'

INSURGENTS in Afghanistan claimed the life of Royal Marine Cpl Damian 'Dee' Mulvihill in a bomb attack near the town of Sangin.

The 32-year-old NCO was killed instantly as he led his section on a sweep of the terrain around the Helmand town on February 20.

Cpl Mulvihill – known by comrades as 'The Bear' – and his men were carrying out a joint Allied-Afghan National Army operation to root out Taleban around Sangin and stop the insurgents from intimidating the local populace when an improvised explosive device was detonated.

"Dee was a unique individual who brought inspiration to all who knew him. He was admired by his peers and respected by his superiors," said Capt Mark Elliott RM, adjutant of 40 Commando.

"His never-ceasing smile and 'bear-like' handshake will always be remembered, as will his passion on the rugby pitch.

"The Royal Marines have lost a truly exceptional individual who will never be forgotten. It is an honour to call him a comrade and even more so a friend."

WO2 Andrew Brownrigg, Alpha Coy Sergeant Major, added: "His absence has left a big void within the company. He never had a bad word to say to anyone and nobody ever had a bad word to say about him.

"My lasting memory of him will be his cheerfulness and his ability to put a smile on people's faces."

Cpl Mulvihill joined the commandos in 1998 and served in Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland.

As well as being an exemplary green beret, he excelled at sport, representing the Corps at rugby union and the Combined Services at water polo.

He had been planning to move to CTCRM at Lympstone at the end of 40 Commando's tour and tie the knot with his fiancée Lisa.

FOSTie period for frigates

FRIGATE Northumberland has returned to sea after a fairly lengthy spell alongside at home in Devonport receiving some TLC ahead of further exertions.

While the Type 23 warship was enjoying an overhaul, her ship's company scattered to the four corners of the UK... and beyond.

Most disappeared on various training courses, but 15 headed to Les Menuires in France to take part in the RN ski championships. Rather warmer climes beckoned for ten shipmates who flew to Dahab in Egypt for a diving expedition.

But now it's back to more mundane activities: damage control and fire-fighting training, seamanship drills and gunnery exercises before Northumberland joins the Flag Officer Sea Training in June for operational sea training to prepare her for deployment later in the year.

The FOST team have already put HMS Chatham through her paces in the less usual surroundings of Portland rather than Plymouth.

The Type 22 frigate spent three days in the Dorset port, where activities alternated between seamanship duties and routines, monitored closely by the FOSTies, and presentations to local dignitaries, associations and members of the public.



● The formerly top-secret underground submarine facility in Sevastopol, now on HMS Exeter's tourist trail

Tunnel visions

TWO tunnels, one known the world over, one hidden for half a century, have welcomed the men and women of HMS Exeter with open 'arms'.

We'll start with the famous one: the tunnel on Monaco's legendary Formula 1 Grand Prix circuit.

It's nearly two decades since a major British warship has visited the tiny principality on France's Mediterranean coast.

That last visitor was HMS Minerva with a young midshipman, Paul Brown, aboard enjoying the hospitality of the fabled resort of the rich and famous.

Eighteen years down the line and a now Cdr Paul Brown was in charge of Exeter as he brought her in to Monte Carlo.

Actually, first of all Exeter stopped at the idyllic town of Villefranche-Sur-Mer, a short hop along the Riviera. There the great and good of Monaco and some ex-pats climbed aboard and joined the ship for the trip along the coast to the principality.

The welcome there from ex-pats and Monegasques was as warm as any Exeter's ship's company had experienced.

More than 30 sailors couldn't resist the chance to drive the F1 circuit (not in F1 cars but a Porsche, Jaguar XKR and Bentley). Unsurprisingly, they didn't set any track records... but they did roar past the Monte Carlo Casino – 'Casino Royale' in the eponymous Bond novel – and through that tunnel.

It wasn't the only taste of the high life for the ship's company. Other sailors were invited aboard the superyacht Rio Rita (as used by, among others, the Duchess of Cornwall); sadly, the hire fee was a little beyond their grasp (£100,000 per week). And yet more took up an invite from the mayor of Monte Carlo to attend the carnival in Nice (think Rio carnival but in the south of France).

And then it was eastwards, through the Med, up the Dardanelles, into the Sea of Marmara, then through the Bosphorus – which few of the ship's company had sailed through before – then into the Black Sea.



Two decades ago, a Royal Navy warship pootling around the Black Sea would have drawn the attention of the Soviets' Black Sea Fleet.

Today, however, Allied navies are fostering ever closer relations with their Black Sea counterparts in the global fight against terrorist and criminal activities on the oceans.

Two Ukrainian naval officers joined Exeter for the passage from Monaco to the Crimean port of Sevastopol, via Constanta in Romania.

"One surprise, especially in Romania, was the unexpected but excellent command of English – almost everyone spoke it perfectly, more so than in some of the UK's closer European neighbours," said Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Peter Broadbent.

That wasn't the case across the Black Sea in Sevastopol, but the Ukrainians were no less hospitable.

One of the highlights of the visit to the peninsula was a chance to tour the battlefields of the Crimean War, including the valley where the Light Brigade thundered to their doom.

Sevastopol itself was later invested by the British and French, a battle which is depicted on a 360° panoramic painting (created over three years by 17 different artists).

From echoes of a distant war to echoes of the Cold War – and the second tunnel in this story.

The sailors were invited to tour Sevastopol's secret 'submarine factory' where the Red Fleet's boats were re-armed during the four-decade stand-off between East and West. Few people outside the military knew of the complex's existence; Sevastopol was a 'closed' city because of its importance as a naval base, but most of its inhabitants were not aware of the facility.

Of course, it's not all yachts, casinos and tunnels for the veteran destroyer – the sole active survivor of the Falklands War.

The key aim of her sortie into the Black Sea was to discuss operations in the Mediterranean that the Romanian and Ukrainian have been involved in already – and those they could be involved with in the future to counter illegal activities on the high seas.

● Exeter basks in the Mediterranean sunshine alongside in Monte Carlo



Astonishing achievement by Gannet

THE busiest Search and Rescue team in Britain received a thank-you from the top man in the military.

Defence Secretary Des Browne dropped in on HMS Gannet, the Prestwick-based Sea King Search and Rescue unit, to pay tribute to men and women who risk their lives so others may live.

The Sea Kings were scrambled 359 times in 2007 – 90 times more than the year before. In doing so they rescued 349 people – 286 of those were injured.

The previous rescue record was held by RAF Chivenor in 2006; its yellow Sea Kings responded to 293 call-outs.

The busy trend shows no sign of abating. The first eight weeks of 2008 have seen 50 people rescued by the Gannet team in 49 rescues, including the high-profile sortie to pluck people from the stricken ferry Riverdance off Blackpool during January's storms.

Operations over the sea are the exception rather than the rule for the Prestwick-based fliers; most of their rescue missions are conducted over the mountains of Scotland – Ben Nevis and Glencoe fall within the 98,000 square miles which are Gannet's domain.

"It's always nice to be able to hold a record, but for all of us here, it's not about that – it's about responding whenever we are needed to provide emergency support. No more, no less. That's our job and it's one we all love," said Gannet's CO Lt Cdr Brian Nicholas.

Mr Browne told the SAR team: "You're to be commended for the excellent work which you do above the land and sea of Scotland's west coast and the north of England.

"A call-out for almost every day of the year in 2007 is an astonishing statistic."

■ Kings of the mountains, pages 16-17

Ocean's Eight for Ledbury

MINEHUNTER HMS Ledbury spent three days in London sharing her knowledge of surveying and scouring the oceans to some of the world's top scientists.

The Hunt-class warship berthed at the ExCel Centre in the docklands for the duration of Oceanography International 08 – a conference and trade show for the marine science and ocean technology community.

Industry uses the exhibition to demonstrate the latest kit, while leading academics get together for conferences to discuss the study of the world's oceans.

Ledbury laid on various demonstrations of her sonar, minehunting and command systems kit to hundreds of visitors and delegates, alongside the French naval survey vessel BH Laplace.

"It was a very interesting exhibition – especially being able to see and compare the latest commercial diving technology," said PO(D) 'Eddy' Edmundson, Ledbury's coxswain.

It wasn't all technology, however, during the spell on the Thames. The ship hosted the Mayor of Ledbury, leading figures from local government and Trinity House, while the sailors visited the Tower of London in uniform as part of the 'RN in the Public Eye' initiative.

Members of the wardroom headed even further west, to Notting Hill, to dine at the top-rated Ledbury restaurant... in Ledbury Road. CO Lt Cdr Paul Russell left the chefs a ship's badge as a memento of the visit.

The minehunter is returning to her *raison d'être* after two years on Fishery Protection Duties. She is currently undergoing intensive training before joining a NATO minehunting force on patrol in European waters.

'A very important mission...'



● 'And so we're told this is the golden age'... Sea and sky blend into one as HMS Campbeltown heads to Bahrain during her Gulf patrol
Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter, FRPU East

THE small industrial port of Safaga is perhaps not everyone's ideal destination.

But to the men and women of HMS Argyll it was probably akin to Xanadu and the Garden of Eden rolled into one after one of the most demanding spells at sea in the frigate's history.

Last month we told you that we couldn't really tell you what Argyll had been up to.

And that remains the case. But we can tell you how long she's been doing what we can't tell you about... 52 days.

That's 52 days continually at sea in the Gulf and Indian Ocean (yes, we know submariners do a lot longer but their boats are designed for such sustained operations).

Argyll began her Gulf deployment in earnest with a 30-day spell safeguarding the Iraqi oil platforms – a pretty lengthy patrol in itself.

She handed over that duty to HMS Campbeltown, then popped into Bahrain to prepare herself for a marathon stint at sea.

"Sustaining a Type 23 frigate, which was designed for North Atlantic operations, off East Africa for such a period has been an immense task," said Cdr Gavin Pritchard, Argyll's Commanding Officer.

It took Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Argus and Bayleaf, plus the RFA's US equivalent, the USNS John Lenthall and Walter S Diehl, and a fair bit of resilience from Jack and Jenny to keep the Type 23 going for so long.

"It's testimony to high standards and hard work that we've been able to sustain our fighting capability and achieve everything that has been asked of us," Cdr Pritchard added.

"I am very proud of the whole ship's company for their professionalism throughout

a difficult and changing programme."

Argyll has been away from home in Devonport since the beginning of October and won't be home for some time yet as she continues anti-terror and security patrols east of Suez.

The good news for her crew, however, is that Argyll's days in the Middle East are numbered as her replacement is already Gulf-bound. Her sister HMS Montrose has left Devonport and is currently in the Med.

The current guardian of the oil platforms, HMS Campbeltown, was joined by 120 students from Kuwait's staff college over two days.

A packed programme of demonstrations was laid on for 60 Kuwaitis on each day: air defence exercises, Lynx operations, boarding operations and fast attack defence drills.

And talking of Kuwaitis... A dozen hopped aboard HMS Blyth during a combined exercise involving the British, US and Kuwaiti navies.

The ships of the Aintree task force, HMS Blyth and Ramsey, left Bahrain behind for a week or so to head north.

RN minehunting skills were instrumental in opening up the waters to Kuwait during the 1991 war with Iraq and clearing a path for humanitarian aid to Umm Qasr a dozen years later during the campaign to oust Saddam Hussein.

Several of Blyth and Ramsey's ship's companies served in the 1991 operation; many more took part in the 2003 conflict. They shared their experiences and expertise with their Kuwaiti counterparts during a week-long exercise.

They were joined by American diving experts (EODMU6), a dedicated US helicopter minehunting squadron (HM15)

and the USS Scout, a large minehunter (roughly twice the size of a Sandown-class ship).

Six Kuwaiti clearance divers joined HMS Blyth.

Their work with their opposite numbers from Britain was made considerably easier by the fact that their officer had trained at Dartmouth and several of the divers had undergone training on Horsea Island.

While Blyth focused her efforts on the UK-Kuwaiti diving team to cope with dummy mines in the northern Gulf, Ramsey was the 'disaster' ship – or, more accurately, the 'coping with disaster' ship.

A 'sick' American diver was cross-decked to the Sandown as part of a casualty exercise, before undergoing treatment in Ramsey's therapeutic recompression chamber.

As well as dealing with the mine threat, the ship's company also had to contend with firefighting and enemy attacks courtesy of demonstrations laid on for their Kuwaiti visitors.

A few miles away, off the coast of Iraq, amphibious support ship RFA Cardigan Bay became the saviour of Iraqi sailors when their ship sank in the northern Gulf.

The aged MV Nadi spent five days wallowing in the middle of the sea after breaking down as she headed from Umm Qasr to the United Arab Emirates to be sold off.

Her crew tried to radio for help but a combination of bad weather and faulty wireless kit meant their maydays went unanswered until the signal was finally picked up by tanker USNS Sacagawea.

The American auxiliary plucked the sailors from their sinking vessel, before ferrying them by helicopter to Cardigan Bay at the tip of the Gulf.

The RFA, which serves as a forward floating base for training Iraqi Navy sailors and

naval infantry, offered the ten mariners shelter and food and made arrangements for the men to be reunited with their families in Basra.

On a more permanent basis, Cardigan Bay is home to two fast craft from Inshore Boat Unit 22 and three Iraqi Navy patrol boats.

The former provide souped-up protection for Allied shipping in the northern Gulf; the latter are vital for training Iraqi sailors and marines in the art of boarding vessels, defending shipping from terrorist attack, and safeguarding the two oil terminals which pump Iraq's principal export into waiting tankers.

The RFA's vast loading dock also provides shelter for the patrol boats from the dust storms which whip up around here; on Cardigan

Bay's predecessor, veteran RFA Sir Bedivere (now paid off and awaiting her fate in Portsmouth Harbour), the craft were invariably exposed to the elements.

Keeping the boats in the flooded-up dock has also significantly reduced the time it takes for them to be launched for patrols.

Cardigan Bay is increasingly serving as the hub for naval operations in the northern Gulf – and not merely as a centre for training Iraqis.

The landing support ship is also the focal point for mail drops in the area, as well as transfers of personnel in and out of theatre by boat or helicopter.

The operations of Cardigan Bay and Campbeltown are now directed by a Brit once again with Cdre Duncan Potts stepping

into the shoes of Australian Commodore Allan du Toit at the helm of Combined Task Force 158.

CTF158 oversees the US-UK-Australian mission to protect Iraq's oil terminals and maintain security at sea in the northern Gulf, directing operations from a small control centre on the Khawr Al Amaya platform.

The three Allies take it in turns to oversee operations, with Cdre Potts in charge until August.

"We have a very important mission to conduct. I have the right people, ships and aircraft to achieve the level of stability that is needed," said Cdre Potts.

"Iraq's territorial waters may be small, but I see them as the umbilical cord which feeds much of the Iraqi economy."

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● Cutting edge... a rare view of the bow of HMS Argyll slicing through rather clear Gulf waters



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● Preen of the seas... A penguin cleans itself while HMS Nottingham anchors off Grytviken



The age of

IT'S been a case of 'out of the freezer and into the frying pan' for HMS Nottingham this past month as the destroyer experienced opposite ends of the temperature scale in the South Atlantic.

We will begin in the freezer – South Georgia, to be accurate.

Although it was still high summer in the Southern Hemisphere when the Type 42 warship arrived in this isolated cluster of islands, there was plenty of ice and snow on display for the ship's company.

There were plenty of icebergs too (one almost a mile in length) which were deftly avoided by the bridge team.

Nottingham lowered her anchor off King Edward Point, close to the South Georgian 'capital' Grytviken, permitting most of the ship's company to get ashore by boat.

Some sailors headed to the island's museum, others went in search of penguins (admittedly, they're not too hard to find as South Georgia is home to several large colonies).

Suitably chilled, the sailors decided some austral warmth was the order of the day and turned north towards South America in company with her tanker RFA Gold Rover.

She pumped 500 cubic tons of fuel into Nottingham's tanks during two replenishments at sea – enough to keep the average family car running for seven million miles, apparently.

And then it was on to warm climes. As temperatures topped 30°C, so Nottingham ground to a halt in the middle of the ocean and the cry 'Hands to bathe' echoed around the hallowed



passageways and mess decks.

Those warm waters eventually carried the destroyer to Rio de Janeiro, where the ship celebrated the Royal Navy's role in the foundation of the modern Brazilian nation.

Two hundred years ago the Royal Prince of Portugal and the Portuguese court arrived in Rio. They did so escorted by four of His Majesty's warships: Marlborough, Bedford, London and Monarch.

The arrival of the Portuguese royal family was a seminal moment in Brazilian history. The country's ports were opened to free trade with friendly countries and she began to take her place with the other nations of this world.

Two centuries later, the Brazilians marked the occasion in company with their British allies. Kim Howells, the Foreign Office minister for Latin America, flew to Rio to join the head of the Brazilian Navy for a celebration aboard HMS Nottingham.

It has, of course, not been all penguins, parties and dips in the ocean for the destroyer.

Nottingham is at the tail end of a six-month deployment to the South Atlantic, with principal responsibility for safeguarding the Falklands and environs.

To keep the team on their toes – and to offer some moral support – a string of senior visitors climbed aboard to chat with the sailors: Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the UK National Hydrographer Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff and Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla Cdre Andrew Cameron.

Such visits remind the ship's company that they are not forgotten about more than 8,000 miles from the UK, but they were not the sole reminder of home aboard.

These days, most RN surface ships are blessed with 'creature comforts' few, if any, could have dreamed of barely a decade ago.

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extremes

Certainly HMS Nottingham's Commanding Officer is impressed. He's keeping a regular internet diary or 'blog' as a result of all this technological wizardry.

"I don't want to appear a dinosaur, but I am amazed by the levels of connectivity we have on board – instant email, internet and phone calls to the UK," Cdr Andrew Price writes.

"Not long ago, news from home was all down to the normal mail and letter drops. News from home now comes quickly – world news from the internet and satellite TV which is piped around the messdecks."

Satellite TV has allowed the team to keep up with the latest sporting events, such as the Six Nations, the soaps, and dare we say it 'reality' television.

"No longer do I need to consider closing land to ensure that we can receive a half-decent television picture and no longer is the deputy weapons engineering officer forced to stand out in the cold on the bridge roof, clutching a superbly-engineered aerial array of wire coat hangers, whilst orders to go 'up a bit, right a bit' are shouted through three decks to achieve the best picture," Cdr Price adds in his blog.

Email, internet and satellite TV are not the only morale boosters aboard, there's also Nottingham's PTI Kev 'The Baby Faced Assassin' (a moniker from his boxing days) Green to organise various sporting events, as well as numerous contests and competitions to maintain the 250 sailors at a peak of fitness, body and soul.

Both body and soul were in harmony when Kev organised a Sport Relief mile for the international charity. Sailors raised £200 by completing seven laps of the upper deck.

Not all runs had such a pleasant ending.

No, 11 members of the ship's company visited the RAF dog section at Mount Pleasant in the Falklands – and found themselves 'volunteered' for demonstrations.

The dogs and their handlers conduct patrols, look for explosives and carry out search and rescue missions on the islands.

Thanks to their speed, agility and, above all, bite, (the dogs, not the handlers...) they can also bring criminals to a halt.

The Falklands are not renowned for criminal activity, so step forward 11 volunteers (who just happened to be HMS Nottingham sailors) to play the part of ne'er-do-wells.

Not surprisingly, they weren't able to outrun the attack dogs (whose rather sharp teeth you will be pleased to learn did not penetrate the thick protective suits the volunteers wore).

■ Read Cdr Price's blog at www.blogs.mod.uk/hms_nottingham/



● Nottingham leaves the Falklands bound for South Georgia

Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU East





Grand entrance

THE Orion 08 deployment is now in full swing as task group flagship HMS Illustrious and her escort made their way through the Mediterranean and through the Suez Canal.

Lusty had been delayed in UK waters to complete training and undertake engineering work, but was soon following in the wake of other Orion warships.

Accompanied by destroyer HMS Edinburgh, the carrier was given a three-gun salute as she entered Grand Harbour in Valletta – her first visit to Malta since 2005.

Lusty's links with the island fortress date back to World War 2, when the fourth HMS Illustrious was badly damaged on convoy duties to the island.

Whilst being repaired she was subject to more air attacks which killed and injured many local people.

The links were commemorated on this visit by a twinning ceremony, in which Lusty presented a hunting horn to each of the Three Cities which stand on the southern side of

Grand Harbour – Senglea, Vittoriosa and Cospicua, the heartland of the old Naval dockyards.

The three horns reflect those on the carrier's badge.

A service of remembrance for victims of wartime bombing was held at the Senglea memorial, and chaplain Fr David Yates said: "Laying the wreath at the memorial was a very moving experience for everyone involved."

"I think it is very important that we, of the present HMS Illustrious, remember our history and the tremendous support the people of Malta gave to our forebears and continue to give us today."

Sailors also competed with Maltese teams and colleagues from HMS Edinburgh on the sports fields, while others managed a little sightseeing.

LLogs 'Pat' Garrett said: "I've been around the world and seen some amazing places, but I always love coming back to Malta. The lads and lasses are always made to feel welcome and have a great time."

There was also charity work to be done; water pipes were fixed and a site cleared in Senglea, railings painted outside council offices, and a party also helped out at an animal park.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Illustrious, Capt Steve Chick, said: "The visit was a great success. The ship's company always enjoy coming to Malta as they are so well received."

"It is very humbling for us all to hear the stories of 1941, and I think the twinning ceremony will be a lasting memory for all who took part."

The multinational Orion task group, commanded by Cdre Tom Cunningham, consists of 13 vessels and more than 2,500 people, and will exercise with naval forces in the Indian Ocean before heading back to the UK in late spring.

Among the ships attached to the task group for various stages of the deployment are HMS Westminster, Spanish frigate SNS Mendez Nuñez, French frigate FS Jean Bart and American destroyer USS Cole.

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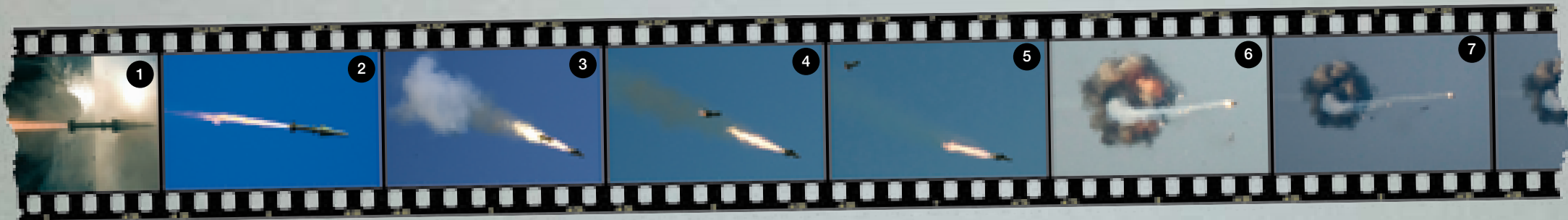
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● HMS Illustrious' starboard 20mm gun is fired during night gunnery exercises on the Orion 08 deployment



● HMS Edinburgh sails past the Valletta waterfront



Return of the big bad wolf



THIS is what happens when missile meets missile at a combined velocity of more than twice the speed of sound.

A drone target towed by a Falcon disintegrates as a Seawolf from HMS Westminster smashes into it low over the ocean.

Last month we featured successful Seawolf firings by HMS Somerset.

Well anything Somerset can do, her sister Westminster can do just as effectively.

Like Somerset, firing Seawolf was the final 'tick in the box' before Westminster was declared fully operational.

Unlike Somerset, we have a complete(ish) sequence of images charting Seawolf's destructive progress thanks to the photography of Lt Jon Wade and PO Bob Sharples, both of Westminster's 829 NAS flight.

Seawolf bursts out of its silo (1) (it's actually launched vertically, but the hole in the film strip was the wrong shape – Ed); races through the sky (2); the booster rocket drops away (3); Seawolf's secondary rocket motors kick in (4) and (5) to carry the missile towards its target at around Mach 2; and finally impact (6) and (7). It all lasts barely ten seconds.

Thanks to its two tracking radars, Seawolf can independently fire a salvo of missiles against two different targets.

With a drone being towed by a friendly aircraft, however, Seawolf was in human hands, not a computer's, for these test firings.

'Firing our Seawolf is always a privilege,' said Lt Cdr Mandy Miller, Westminster's Weapon Engineer Officer.

'It was very pleasing to have achieved our final preparation for the deployment in such style after much hard work from the whole team.'

Westminster is the anti-submarine escort for the Orion 08 deployment led by HMS Illustrious (see opposite), but she can also defend herself against aerial threats.

Should anything slip past Edinburgh's Sea Darts, Westminster's Seawolf missiles are the next line of defence for the carrier task group (the very last line is provided by Illustrious' Goalkeeper automated machine-guns).

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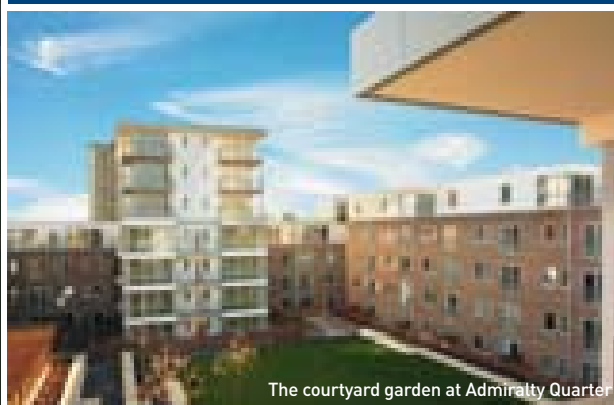
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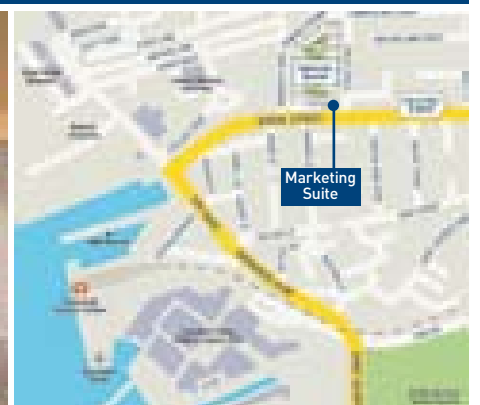
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Footlights and highlights

IF YOU were to walk east from Portsmouth, following the line of the shore like those chaps and chaperones of the TV programme *Coast*, you would not come across the home of a Royal Navy warship for a good while.

In fact, the name of the port might surprise you: Ipswich.

But the Suffolk town is home to HMS Raider, the small training and patrol craft which serves the various universities of East Anglia.

Raider is one of 14 Archer-class patrol craft attached to universities around the UK, aimed at introducing undergraduates to the world of the Senior Service – and giving them a bit of pocket money while studying.

Raider's offices can be found in Cambridge, but the University Royal Navy Unit also draws students from the University of East Anglia (Norwich) and Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge and Chelmsford).

Although one of the smallest vessels in the RN, Raider cannot get down the rivers of East Anglia to reach Cambridge – not without losing her masts and antennae at any rate (she can, however, navigate as far as Wisbech on the Nene).

The winter months are used for training and a spell in a yard on Tyneside for repairs and maintenance, but with spring comes the busy season once again.

Last year saw Raider deploy around the North Sea, visiting Holland, Belgium and Germany,



● HMS Raider races through Sandown Bay off the Isle of Wight on a fine spring day

crewed by her complement of full-time RN personnel and students, accompanied by her sister ship HMS Tracker, which serves Oxford University.

This year Raider has taken part in high-profile commemorations of the Channel Dash off Deal

and spent Easter sailing around Belgium and Holland with her students aboard.

Raider was commissioned a decade ago, replacing HMS Loyal Watcher as Cambridge URNU's dedicated vessel.

She is one of two Batch 2 orders

for Archer-class boats (Tracker was the other); one notable feature of these improved Archers is their more powerful engines, allowing her to reach speeds of up to 25kts, not 20kts like her older sisters.

Two previous Raiders have hoisted the White Ensign.

The first HMS Raider was a Great War R-class destroyer which served for 11 years.

The second Raider had a particularly distinguished career in the Mediterranean and Far East.

All the ship's battle honours were earned by the second Raider

– while her ship's company earned four Distinguished Service Medals and five Mentions in Dispatches.

She was sold to the Indian Navy after World War 2 and served her new owners admirably as INS Rana until 1976 before being broken up.



Arctic..... 1942-43
Sicily..... 1943
Salerno..... 1943
Mediterranean 1943
Sabang 1944
East Indies 1944
Burma..... 1944-45

Class: Archer class patrol and training vessel (batch 2)

Pennant number: P275
Builder: Ailsa, Troon
Commissioned: January 1988

Displacement: 54 tons
Length: 20.8 metres
Beam: 5.8 metres
Draught: 1.8 metres
Speed: 25 knots
Complement: 11
Propulsion: 2 x MTU
Diesels generating 2,000hp
Range: 550 miles at 15kt
Armament: Fitted for but not with 1 x Oerlikon 20mm

Serves: Cambridge, University of East Anglia and Anglia Ruskin University
Based: Ipswich

Battle Honours

Facts and figures

WIN BEER FOR A YEAR WITH HELP FOR HEROES SPITFIRE ALE

Britain's oldest brewer, Shepherd Neame, has created a limited edition Help for Heroes Spitfire Ale to raise funds for the charity Help for Heroes.

Help for Heroes is a new national charity which aids members of the armed forces who return wounded from tours of duty. The charity is working hard to raise funds to build a gym and swimming pool at the Defence Medical Services Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court, Epsom, Surrey.

Navy News and Help for Heroes have teamed up to give you the chance to win one of the two prizes of 288 25cl bottles of Help for Heroes Spitfire Ale. Answer the simple question below and get your entry off today.

THIS COMPETITION IS ONLY OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF BRITAIN INCLUDING NORTHERN IRELAND AGED 18 OR OVER

The closing date is 12:00hrs Friday May 9 2008. The decision of the judges is final and there is no alternative prize. Employees of Navy News are not eligible to enter this competition

HELP FOR HEROES COMPETITION
The Defence Medical Services Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court is located in which county?

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HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.48

Capt Bernard Armitage Warburton Warburton-Lee VC

AS night fell on Narvik on Tuesday April 9 1940, Joseph Goebbels was feeling rather self-satisfied.

That very day German forces had occupied key points in Norway and Denmark under the very noses of the British. "This is a gift from the Gods," the Nazi propagandist screamed in his diary. "Churchill was expecting news of the English invasion – and those damned Germans had got there first."

Hubris is almost inevitably followed by reversal. In the home of the *Seefrieden*, the German Naval War Staff, a short distance from the Propaganda Ministry, there was no gloating.

The mood was a mixture of anxiety and relief. The Kriegsmarine's losses that Tuesday had been "grave" but also "in proportion to the risk run". They would only grow heavier, the Chief-of-Staff Otto Schniewind feared, poring over the radio messages, maps and reconnaissance forces. "Powerful and superior British and French naval forces" were mustering in the North Sea. They would strike before dawn.

As Goebbels gloated and Schniewind fretted, Capt Bernard Armitage Warburton Warburton-Lee conferred with the senior officers of his 2nd Destroyer Flotilla aboard his flagship HMS Hardy in the Vestfjord.

The Germans had landed at Narvik that morning. The Admiralty demanded them dislodged – but no had no idea how strong the enemy was. "You alone can judge whether attack should be made. We shall support whatever decision you take," Whitehall signalled the destroyer captain.

After conferring with his commanders, Warburton-Lee withdrew to his cabin and pondered the fate of his force of five destroyers. His mind made up, he emerged and ordered a signal sent to London: "Inland attacking at dawn."

Furries of snow mingled with the Arctic fog as Warburton-Lee charged towards the iron ore port of Narvik. His guns opened fire, taking the sleeping Germans entirely by surprise.

The flagship *Wilhelm Heintz* was crippled, torpedoes from Hardy smashed into the destroyer *Anton Schmitt*, breaking her in two. She capsized and sank in a flash.

Shells rained down on a third German destroyer; the blooms ashore around the narrow fjord sides. Tankers and merchant ships were damaged or wrecked.

And then Warburton-Lee and his force retired to regroup.

It had been a classic destroyer action, but Warburton-Lee changed his luck and returned to pound the battered German force.

And here his luck ran out, for five hitherto unseen enemy destroyers emerged from the fjords. Trying to escape for the open sea Hardy was hit by successive salvos.

One wiped out the entire bridge team, killing or wounding every man. More smashed the engine room. Hardy was beached, her crew waded and swam ashore.

Suffering terrible head wounds, Bernard Warburton-Lee briefly rallied and stood up, pointing to the shore. His comrades carefully carried him off the ship and on to a raft, but he died before he reached dry land.

The final signal hoisted by the 44-year-old Scotsman was typical of his dash and nerve: *Keep on engaging the enemy.*

Warburton-Lee would become the first gallant naval VC of World War 2 (Gerard Roope earned his posthumously three days before, but it would be 1945 before his deeds were appreciated by his nation).

He had, said his citation, shown "gallantry, enterprise and daring in command". Half the German invasion force at Narvik had been damaged or destroyed for the loss of two British destroyers.

He was laid to rest in Ballangen cemetery in Norway; his grave is regularly adorned by wreaths laid by British sailors who return to these waters most winters on exercise.





To the ends of the earth

THE end of March was the start of something new for Commando Helicopter Force squadron, 845 NAS, who left their home base of Yeovilton behind to head out for the first time to the dry mountains of Afghanistan.

The Sea Kings of 845 have joined with their sister squadron 846 in the landlocked nation to take on the support helicopter role for the coalition forces.

Preparations for deployment take long enough under normal circumstances, but 845 NAS have had to squeeze a lot of work into a short amount of time – they only returned from Iraq four months and three days prior to heading out to Afghanistan on their latest operational stint in a new theatre.

Of course, as we reported last month, the HC4 Sea Kings had to be beefed up with a new design of rotor blades and tail rotor, avionics, radio and defensive aids suite. A comprehensive package of engineering and technical work that earned them the new title of HC4+.

Lt Ben McGreal said: "This work, running alongside other commitments elsewhere, placed

immense demands upon the engineers on the squadron.

"But working to an exceptionally tight schedule that left no margin for error, they did a sterling job to get the first batch aircraft ready to deploy on time."

And it was not just the machinery that had to be prepared for the new environment, as the men and women of 845 NAS had barely returned to British shores before they packed their bags and headed out to the cold of Norway for the annual Clockwork training in Bardufoss.

Lt McGreal said: "Even before extraction from Iraq, some elements of the squadron began survival training in Bardufoss."

"In early January most of the squadron joined them in northern Norway to conduct a specially-designed extreme cold weather flying course."

"Whilst it may seem strange to deploy to the frozen north of the Arctic Circle to conduct pre-deployment training for the desert, the re-circulating snow, mountains and brutal challenge of operating aircraft in extreme conditions provided exceptional training for Afghanistan."

There was little rest for the

members of C Flight on return from Norway, as they plunged headfirst into pre-deployment training, learning about the country in which they would soon be operating.

"This involved numerous lectures on the country, the threat, time on the range honing our weapon skills and eye-watering talks from the medics on what the local wildlife could do to the unsuspecting or lazy matelots," added Lt McGreal.

"For the aircrew there was an intense flying package designed to simulate the conditions, threats and mission pressure they were going to experience in country."

"This meant a lot of flying as well as crew contact drills designed to ensure that the aircrew knew what to do should they find themselves on the ground in Taliban-held territory."

Cdr Matt Briers, commanding officer of 845 NAS, commented: "Every single member of 845 NAS has worked exceptionally hard following our withdrawal from combat operations in Iraq to ensure the squadron is ready for this new challenge."

"The effort required to concurrently recover aircraft from Basra,

modify others to the HC4+ standard, conduct cold climate training and prepare people for a new war has been huge."

"That we have achieved this has been down to the commitment of each and every member of the squadron."

He concluded: "I am immensely privileged to command such people and know they will do a first-class job in theatre as everyone is relishing the chance to get involved and show what 845 NAS and the Commando Helicopter Force will do."

The arrival of 845 NAS in

theatre alongside 846 NAS will double the number of CHF personnel on Op Herrick, operating as part of the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan).

The Lynx aircraft of 847 NAS are programmed to join their Sea King cousins in CHF later this year, meaning that the Fleet Air Arm will be the largest British military operator of aircraft in theatre.

● (top) The aurora borealis is a dramatic backdrop for the Sea Kings of 845 NAS

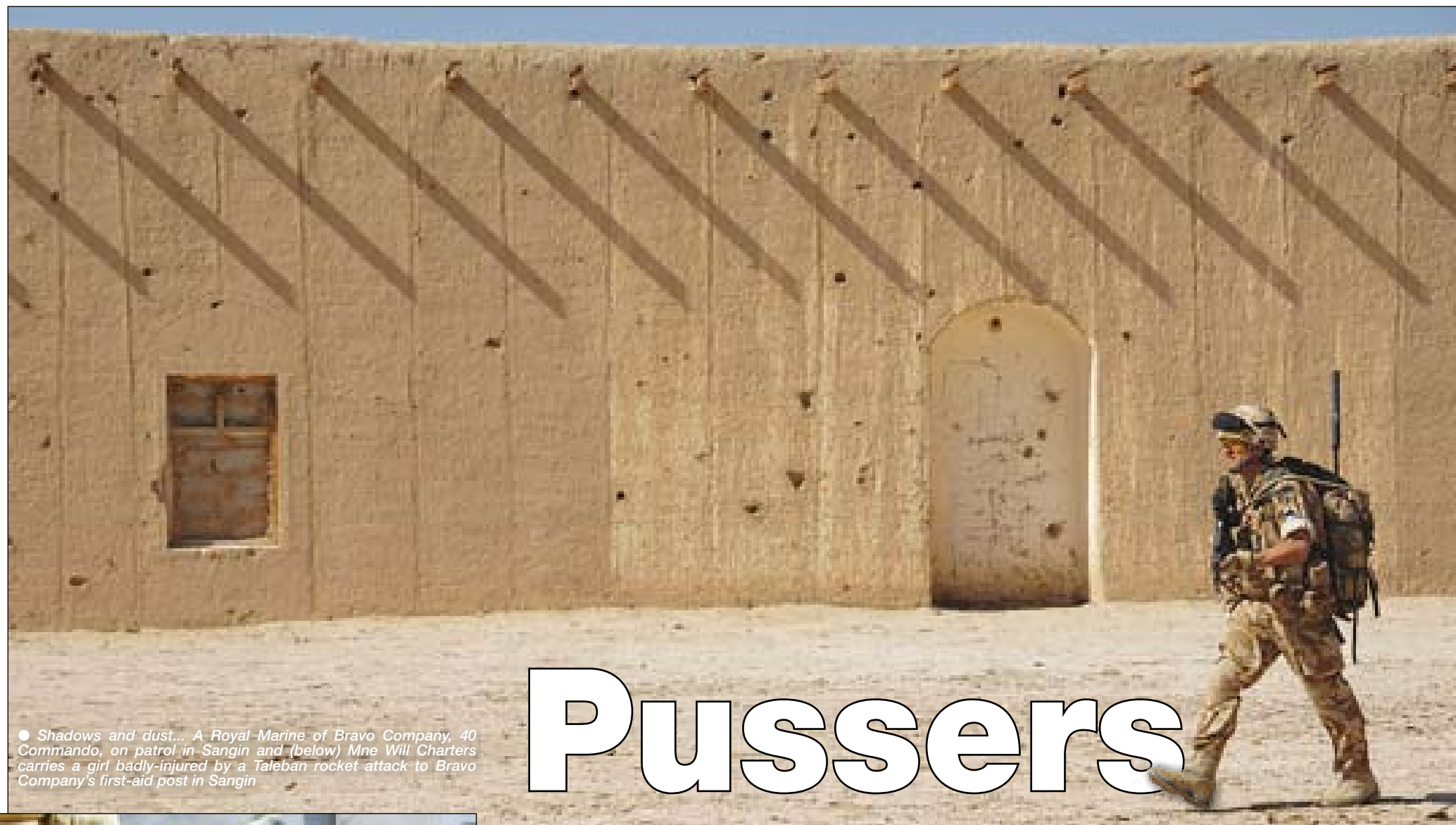
● (below) Cold weather training for 845 NAS aircrew in Norway



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● Shadows and dust... A Royal Marine of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, on patrol in Sangin and (below) Mne Will Charters carries a girl badly-injured by a Taliban rocket attack to Bravo Company's first-aid post in Sangin

Pussers



IF ANYWHERE in Afghanistan epitomises the odious nature of Taliban, it is the market town of Sangin.

For a decade, Sangin was a Taliban stronghold in name and nature. It was a heartland of fundamentalism, a hotbed of the opium trade, the last outpost of Taliban rule.

Yet if anywhere in Afghanistan epitomises what can be achieved in the absence of that evil regime, it is Sangin.

The Royal Marines of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, are the guardians of Sangin. Their comrades from the Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team are the catalysts for its regeneration.

When the Taliban held sway in Sangin, normal life came to a halt. The market withered. The school closed. Only religious instruction was permitted under the fundamentalist regime.

Stagnation was compounded by destruction as fighting raged about the town.

"People had forgotten what Sangin should be like," said Capt Andy Goldsmith, head of 40 Commando's specialist Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team in the town.

"Now we are finally starting to

see progress that people can buy into, and the feedback we are getting is very encouraging."

The authorities have a ten-year plan for the town, aided by the protection offered by Bravo Company, 40 Commando.

That protection has seen people return to Sangin in their droves (more than five million people have returned to Afghanistan from neighbouring states since the Taliban were ousted).

The bazaar now thrives once again. Teams of workers are clearing the rubble of buildings destroyed in the fighting for Sangin and a new tarmac road will soon be laid to the town's school.

That school was also damaged in the skirmishes – but the real damage was done long before, when the Taliban ruled the town.

Under their rule, girls aged eight and over were forbidden an education; those under eight could learn only the Qur'an. Female teachers were sacked. Anyone who broke these laws faced execution.

Although the Taliban were eventually driven from Sangin, their baleful influence has sadly

persisted.

Teachers remain wary of returning to school – they and their pupils still face intimidation from die-hard fundamentalists.

Mercifully, the desire to learn has proved too strong in the face of ignorance and repression.

Gurkha engineers helped to re-build part of the ten-classroom school – enough has been restored for lessons to resume for both girls and boys, with 65 children already on the school's books.

"We cannot underestimate the effect of hearing the sound of children playing in the school again," said Lt Pete Ryan, part of the CIMIC team.

"Many of the children have never been to school, but now they can pursue an education with confidence."

The school is, perhaps understandably, rather austere and lacking in almost all the basics which Britain's youngsters take for granted.



Thanks to efforts by children in 40 Commando's home town, some colour will return to the lives of Sangin's youths.

Pupils at Queen's College junior school in Taunton are donating sports equipment, drawings and art work and simple equipment so the school in Sangin can get back on its feet.

"It's fantastic that the pupils have taken this opportunity to exchange some of their artwork with the children of Sangin," said Capt Mark Elliott, 40 Cdo's adjutant – and a former Queen's College pupil.

"This adds a great new dimension to all the efforts that have been put into the area over the last four months."

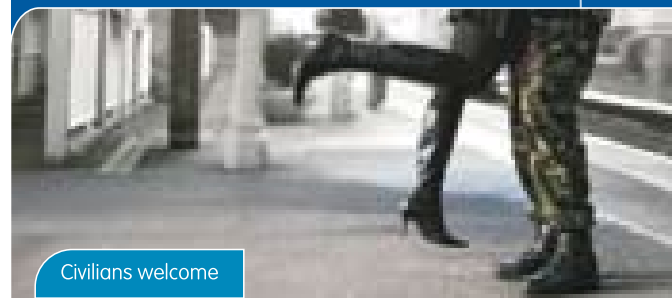
Education will hopefully destroy the Taliban's roots and prevent them taking hold again in the future. For the present, the drugs trade is their lifeblood and Sangin was the epicentre of southern Afghanistan's opium market, followed by Musa Qaleh to the north.

The people grappling



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- searching for that special someone?
- or just good friends?



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I WORK in the Force Movements Control Centre and am responsible for the physical movement of passengers, mail and cargo within theatre, be that by road or air.

We are responsible for the surface lines of communication from Karachi to Kandahar or Kabul and air lines of communication within country.

I run the tactical air desks, ensuring that the theatre freight movement priorities list is adhered to as well as moving passengers and of course the ever important mail.

My main effort is currently focussed on the Relief in Place (RiP), where 16 Air Assault Brigade replaces 52 Brigade. This started on March 6 and will move 12,400 passengers between UK and Afghanistan.

This requires careful planning to ensure that the right number of passengers are allocated to each RAF Tristar, the strategic aircraft used to move all military passengers into theatre, and then the right number of C130 Hercules are available to move passengers

THE National Support Command HQ in Kandahar provides logistics, administrative, medical and personnel support to all UK troops throughout Afghanistan. At its heart is a 12-strong team of Royal Navy logisticians, writes the Deputy Commander, Capt David Marsh.

We sit alongside our RAF and Army counterparts in the Joint Force Support Headquarters. Beyond the more usual personnel, medical and joint supply chain responsibilities, the team is now involved in new areas such as

theatre container management, management of local contracts with Afghan contractors and the movement of stores, personnel and much more throughout this landlocked country.

I am delighted to report that the team is making a significant impact in Operation Herrick and enjoying the challenge enormously. This might seem an unlikely destination for the RN Logistics Branch but we stand ready to continue with this commitment for the foreseeable future. I will let a selection of the team tell their own story.

forward to Camp Bastion (the main UK base in Helmand) and beyond – so as you can see, I will be fairly busy.

Being in the centre is a very rewarding job which provides me with professional experience outside of the norm and I would strongly recommend this job to any RN logistician wishing to broaden their military and professional logistics knowledge.

– Lt Cdr Gary Manning

WHO would have imagined after 20 years in the RN that I would be in the middle of a desert in a landlocked country wearing desert camouflage uniform? Well that's

exactly what has happened. I'm now based at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.

It's a Joint HQ and I'm in the J1 Branch – J1 looks after people – where we provide personnel and administrative support to all UK soldiers, sailors and airmen on Herrick, some 8,000 people, including 140 RN and 770 RM.

Already I have travelled to Camp Bastion, Lashkar Gar and Kabul, including frisky flights over the desert in Army Lynx, C130 hops, squeezing into the back of Saxons and driving through the streets of Kabul in armoured Landcruisers.

There are a huge range of personnel issues, ranging from the

strategic, where I ensure policies such as the Operational Welfare Package reaches our Forward Operating Bases, to the deeply tactical, where I take a personal interest in the welfare of specific individual cases where extra support is required.

And most importantly there is the genuine ability to make a difference. I've had my fair share of challenge, responsibility and variety during my career in the RN, but this job takes the biscuit – for anyone out there who is interested, if you get the chance I recommend that you grab the opportunity.

It's hard work and you need to keep on your toes – but it's worth

Pictures: LA(Phot) 'AJ' Macleod, 40 Commando

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“There is no doubt that the Logistic Support Branch (termed J4) is the heart beat of any logistics HQ and I have the role of co-ordinating the outputs of the various combat supplies desk officers as they make best use of 1st (front line), 2nd (Camp Bastion)

Daily engagement with the other Services, coalition nations and organisations to deliver logistic effect is always interesting, hugely rewarding and even fun.

– Lt Cdr Charles Evans

Kings of the mountains

IT'S often the simplest things which make the greatest impact.

A large map of Scotland posted on the wall is peppered with small numbered pins. Up and up go the numbers. They stop at 357.

In places, the figures cluster – around Ben Nevis and Glencoe especially.

For it is there that the men and women of HMS Gannet are at home.

There are 'wet jobs' – rescues in the Clyde, over the Irish Sea, even out in the Atlantic. They are the exception not the rule.

"The mountains are our bread and butter," says Lt Cdr Martin Lanni, Gannet's second-in-command.

His boss nods. "Our *raison d'être* is mountain rescue. That's what makes us different from any other RN unit," says Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas, Gannet's Commanding Officer.

Indeed it does. But shouldn't naval aviators be touching down on the back of a frigate rolling on the high seas, ferrying commandos around in the swirling dust of Afghanistan or plucking trawlermen from sinking fishing vessels in the Channel?

Ah, thereby lies a tale.

It grew from the need to rescue downed fliers from Britain's waters – although it was very much a secondary role for squadrons typically dedicated to anti-submarine warfare. And the secondary role soon became the principal one; the UK has a legal obligation to rescue those in trouble in its waters.

Those waters lie a relative stone's throw away from Gannet's home on the edge of Prestwick international airport, near Ayr.

But the seas are safer than the hills and mountains less than an hour's flying time to the north... where that bread and butter is earned.

It's not just the airmen who earn their bread and butter here. The aviators rely on the invaluable local knowledge of mountain rescue teams. Uniquely, once a casualty has been carried off a mountainside to safety, the Sea King invariably returns to pick up the rescue teams.

Sitting here in a nice, well comfortable, office in HMS



Nowhere away from the battlefield is more dangerous for aviators. And no aviators are busier than the men and women of HMS Gannet. RICHARD HARGREAVES spent a day with Britain's No.1 Search And Rescue unit.

Nelson, it all sounds so routine. Take off, pick up a mountain rescue team, pick up the victim, take them to hospital, return for rescue team, take them home, return to base.

It is, of course, anything but. "The weather you see out of the window here is not the same as up in the mountains," imparts Lt Cdr Nicholas.

And the weather – the swirling winds and gusts racing down the glens and lochs and over the peaks, the snow, the driving rain, the sleet, the infamous Scottish mist – is only one half of the challenge in the mountains.

There is the constant danger of a 'tip strike' – of the rotor blades striking a crag or rock face as the helicopter manoeuvres to conduct a rescue. Add the complication of darkness or poor visibility and you begin to see why senior officers regarded Search and Rescue as the most challenging flying away from the battlefield.

It is also probably the most high-profile. Few months go by without some rescue or other making the headlines.

The men and women of Gannet would never regard themselves as heroes – that word tritely bandied about by journalists. Nor are they adrenaline junkies or people living for death or glory. Nor again, though, is this an ordinary occupation.

"This is a 'life and death' job," says Lt Cdr Stuart 'Spike' Pike. "But it's also a balancing act. We do not rush into a rescue with both feet. There's no bravado in this career."

"But there are times when you realise that someone has lived because of what we've done – and that's very satisfying."

Most missions conclude with

that "very satisfying" feeling. But this is not Hollywood. There is not always a happy ending.

"There are occasions when you want to help but circumstances won't allow you," explains Lt Cdr Nicholas. "When the tug capsized in the Clyde recently we were hovering along the river at 20ft but in the end we had to give up because of the fog."

"Saying 'no' is the most difficult thing we can do. It's not something we say lightly."

It is not always the weather which is beyond the crew's control.

"I never realised how much was involved in a heart transplant until we had to fly a harvest team to Fort William in atrocious conditions," says Spike.

"That call came at the end of a 20-hour day when we'd flown five missions. We got there, but it was too late. It was quite a sad ending – we'd done everything we could, but it wasn't enough."

Unlike other emergency services, the Search and Rescue teams suffer few, if any, hoax calls; when the Sea King scrambles there's a genuine need or, rarely, someone is genuinely mistaken.

And most rescues are victims of circumstance. Generally speaking, they do not rashly set off into the hills and mountains, ill-prepared or ill-equipped – although the weather can often catch them out. No amount of planning and precaution, however, can prevent that stumble over a rock, that fall, that slip which forces them to call for help.

That call for help is becoming considerably more easy... which means considerably more call-outs for Gannet.

"People are using their mobile phones more – in the past they might have hobbled down a mountain. Now they give us a call," says Spike. On the plus side,



● **Reflecting on a hectic year... A Gannet cab and one of its crew as seen through the glare of a helmet**

Picture: LA(Phot) Del Trotter, FRPU Clyde

the rescuers can at least get an accurate fix on someone's location courtesy of their phones.

To those rescued, the winchman – the 'dope on a rope' as colleagues affectionately refer to them – is the knight in shining armour (or dayglo flying suit).

"Best job in the world. Love it," says LACMN Kev Regan, a gift-of-the-gab Scouser.

"One minute you're on top of Ben Nevis, the next you're over a fishing vessel."

"It's a very challenging job, but it's also a pretty satisfying one. If you are the only person who can help – and you did help – then it gives you a warm feeling."

Kev is a 'jungle' veteran,

who underwent an eight-week conversion course to learn the art of precision winching, as well as receiving medical instruction. And one thing is worth stressing: aircrewmembers are not rescue swimmers. They do not intentionally leap into a raging sea to pluck a mariner to safety.

"Being in jungles was good, but there you train for what could happen and often doesn't, whereas here you what you are trained to do on a daily basis," he says.

The winchman may be the epitome of Search and Rescue in the public's mind, but ask anyone at Gannet and they'll tell you it's a team effort.

"You rely on everybody doing

SAR performance

IN A fairly small-scale organisation – there are just 12 Search and Rescue units in the UK – the Royal Navy makes up the smallest part – two dedicated units; the Coastguard and RAF provide the remainder.

Indeed, HMS Gannet is one of the smallest dark blue enclaves in the UK. Uniformed personnel total little more than 30; total staff numbers just break the 100 barrier.

There's no wardroom here (but there is the Elvis Bar, made from a bit of bowling lane apparently used by The King when he passed through Prestwick nearly 50 years ago), no junior or senior rates' mess.

Indeed, driving through a village on the edge of the airfield I'm convinced the 'RNAS Prestwick' sign on the roundabout must be wrong.

The road is lined by homes, aircraft hangars and sheds. But then there's the giveaway: the White Ensign fluttering in the stiff breeze on a mast.

This is the sole Fleet Air Arm presence north of the border. If you want to find another whirlybird with the letters ROYAL NAVY emblazoned on the side, you have to fly 320 miles south to Yeovilton.

Gannet's domain does not stretch quite that far, mercifully. It is vast, nevertheless – there is none vaster among the UK's dozen SAR units: 98,000 square miles of land and sea.

A piece of string with markers every ten miles fixed firmly into Prestwick by a pin allows the fliers to instantly work out roughly how far their destination is when that call to scramble comes.

The SAR Sea King HAS 5 has an endurance of about five hours – covering roughly anywhere

within a 200-mile radius of Gannet. That gives the aircrew about 30 minutes "on scene".

One Sea King sits on the tarmac at 15 minutes' notice to move by day, 45 minutes by night. Disappointingly, when the call to scramble comes, there's no fireman's pole to slither down (*probably because they're not firemen – Ed*).

"You spend 99 per cent of the time sitting in the crew room," says Spike.

"But when that call comes in, you have two or three, perhaps five, minutes to plan a mission."

There are times, however, when you can prepare yourself mentally in advance – such as when you know a storm is brewing. Gannet has a small meteorological team who provide daily weather briefings for the flight and also Faslane, BUTEC (the underwater warfare testing range near the Kyle of Lochalsh) and 45 Commando.

But not every call-out is provoked by the weather; there's a strong cluster of numbered pins driven into the map around Rothesay (pop. 6,000) on the Isle of Bute (it's not a place which draws mountaineers, but it is a place where women in labour need ferrying to the mainland).

For NHS duties, the Navy can charge the relevant health authority; for rescues there is no charge, whether it is the individual's fault or not.

SAR is an expensive business. Fuel isn't cheap. Aircrew are neither cheap to train nor cheap to pay. And then there's the aircraft. It's not cheap to buy. It's not cheap to maintain either.

Sea King is old. The first ones entered service four decades ago. The last ones rolled off the production line in 1990.

With age comes increased maintenance. For every hour in the air, a Sea King devours

around 40 'man hours' on the ground from its engineers.

They are not AETs and AEMs, but messieurs; support organisation Serco, not Fleet Air Arm engineers look after the 'birds' – although many of the civvies are former RN Sea King maintainers.

"We're here 24 hours a day, just like the aircraft and just like the aircrew," explains Hugh Shand, site engineering manager (and a former matelot).

"The aircraft expect to fly about 1,500 hours a year, so they get a service every night. You just need to give them a bit more TLC."

Sea King is tried and tested technology. So too is the 'sea search' radar which the flight observer uses in the back of the cab. It will pick out ships, buoys, cliffs. It will not pick up aircraft. Nor people.

For that there is the Mark I eyeball, aided in the dark by night vision goggles – a vital piece of kit the naval SAR teams didn't have a decade ago. But they are not a panacea. They do not turn night into day.

They need some natural light to aid them; without you get 'scintillation' (picture the fuzz you get on your TV when you lose your signal. Now imagine it being green). The goggles are also heavy; the aircrew only wear them for short periods when they're over the rescue scene.

The goggles are today's and tomorrow's technology. Sea King is very much yesteryear – but the Search and Rescue variant is not due to be phased out for another decade.

By then, however, SAR in the UK will look very different. From 2012 onwards, one contractor will take over the entire operation; it will call upon a core of 66 military pilots.

Whether Gannet is still here then is a decision for the future. Until that day, its men and women will make decisions daily. And theirs truly are a matter of life and death.



● **A winchman is hauled up into one of Gannet's Sea Kings**

Picture: WO1 Ian Arthur, FRPU Clyde



● A breath of fresh Ayr... Gannet's on-call Sea King conducts training near The Cobbler

Picture: LA(Phot) Del Trotter, FRPU Clyde

Like a muppet on a string...

YOU can see the attraction.

There is a wonderfully bleak beauty to this landscape. Grouse dash up the slopes. Squirrels scurry between the bushes. Water rushes down gullies, tumbling over boulders, crashing into pools below. It's clear why its beloved by climbers and hillwalkers. But not today. I may have written previously that it wasn't particularly bad north of the border in 2007. Allow me to retract that statement right now. For while it's a bright, if blustery, day at Prestwick, there's a storm raging amid the peaks and glens of Argyll. At 2,000ft, the wind is gusting up to 50mph. Thanks to the skill of the pilots, you don't notice it too much in the back of the cab. But stare out of the side door and you'll see horizontal sleet shooting past. The pilot's not happy with the wind. Nor is LACMN Kev Regan. He fires an orange flare on to the mountainside around The Cobbler, a peak

rising 881 metres (2,900ft) above Loch Long. It's a common practice area for the Gannet team. The flare fizzles for a few seconds before clouds of orange smoke billow and then hastily disperse and merge with the murk – revealing just how strong the wind is out there. “I'm not happy with this,” says Lt Cdr Lanni. “What about that rock over there?” That rock over there. To the uninitiated every rock, every little outcrop, every boulder surrounded by tufts of grass and piles of soft snow looks identical. But these mountain men know their domain. That rock is different from this rock. “Happy with that,” says Kev. The Sea King spins around the valley once, twice, perhaps three times as the flight crew assess wind speed and direction. There's no point winching in perfect conditions off a nice, safe ledge. This is a training mission – the duty crew The winchman goes down first to show how it's done. Then it's time for the real dope on a rope... Kev explains what is expected of me. Something to do with rock, mountainside, and avoiding the

tree. It's hard to understand above the roar of the Sea King's engines, which are also belching Avcat No.5 into the back of the helicopter. Man is not meant to fly. And if he is, then he should stay in the vehicle at all times. So while what I'm about to do is bread and butter for the Gannet guys, it's positively barking mad to a deskbound civvy (*Think Inaction Man – Ed*). Who in their right mind hangs on a piece of wire less than an inch thick 3,000ft above a loch in a blizzard? Kev hooks me up to the winch lead then moves to the motor lever; arrows next to it handily explain 'up' and 'down' – “so the Royals know how to use it”. First, very briefly, it's up and then it's down. And once clear of the helicopter it's a wonderfully serene feeling – a bit like gliding or parachuting, with all God's wonders laid out before you: the valley, the craggy mountain tops, the wisps of grass, the rather weather-beaten trees. Arrochar nestles at the foot of the valley. But this is not a smooth ride. The winch lurches. It spins. One minute you're facing the valley, the next the mountainside.

Nor do you drop vertically. You fall at an angle. You have no control. You are entirely in the hands of the men and women in the helicopter. You have no means of communication, save the odd hand signal. Apparently, I was supposed to land on the side of mountain and walk down it, still attached to the winch, before being winched back up again. Simple. The only words to enter that pea-sized brain in my head evidently were ‘winch’, ‘down’, ‘rock’, ‘back again’. So for a couple of minutes, I bump along the damp grass, spin around, bump some more, look up at the helicopter, think “that's a long way up”, and scrape along the rock, buckling my legs. Clearly Kev realises he's dealing with an idiot, and flicks the 'up' lever on the winch. It's all been a rather serene experience. But then it's not been a matter of life and death. No bones broken. No hypothermia setting in. No fog or mist shrouding the peaks. But like all they have rescued before, I'm grateful to plonk myself down on the floor of the Sea King.



● A Girl Guide learns about radio at the RN Amateur Radio Society in HMS Collingwood

A Guide to the airwaves

'THINKING day on the air' drew Girl Guides and Brownies to HMS Collingwood to meet with the radio experts of the RN Amateur Radio Society, whose headquarters is appropriately enough in the Maritime Warfare School.

The girls made use of the radio equipment to make contact with other Guides and Brownies across the UK, and learn about mapping contacts and the use of the phonetic alphabet.

Morse code was taught in an unusual way as the girls spelt out their names on biscuits using icing paste and sweets.

The Senior Rates mess at Collingwood have also been making an effort to make life easier for local children.

The mess donated £1,000 to the Heathfield School in Fareham, which helps children with moderate learning disabilities.

PO Simon 'Nobby' Hall visited the school during an assembly to make the donation, which will go towards a cycle track.

■ And apologies to the Collingwood sailors of the System Engineering Management course who last month were assigned, in error, to HMS Sultan.

Partners in Clyde make the long run south

CREW and personnel connected to patrol ship HMS Clyde have packed their running shoes in preparation for the gruelling Stanley Marathon across the unforgiving Falkland Islands terrain, where steep gradients, high winds and the strange South-Atlantic climate of four seasons in one day make other marathons seem ordinary.

The ship's marine engineer officer Lt Cdr Paul Williams and gunnery officer Lt Andy Scorer are joined by VT Naval Support's George Jamieson, the senior systems manager on the ship, and Paul Blankley, who is based at Abbey Wood, to form the team 'Partners in Clyde'.

Their efforts will go to garner money for charity Seeing is Believing, which aims to restore the sight of people around the world through cataract operations, the training of eye doctors, and the building of vision centres.



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Applications can be made at any time. Those seeking assistance can contact the office direct for an application form:-

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or Laurene Smith
RN & RM Children's Fund
311 Twyford Avenue
Portsmouth
PO2 8RN
Telephone: 023 9263 9534
Fax: 023 9267 7574
Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com

Craig saves lives in Ghana

A NURSING officer from Derriford Hospital in Plymouth led a team out to West Africa to set up a life-saving medical centre.

Lt Craig Brown, an operating theatre specialist at the military hospital unit and specialist adviser to the RN, led a team that headed out to Sekondi and Takoradi in Ghana.

This is the fifth time that the Royal Navy and QARNNS (Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service) have headed out to the African nation to offer their services in reducing the death toll of serious untreated hernias.

Once in country, Craig was in charge of a hernia clinic operating theatre – each five-day visit period draws an average of 140 cases for treatment at the Hernia Treatment Centre in Takoradi.

Craig said: "We are educating the Ghanaians in hernia surgery and they are learning our skills and operating theatre procedures.

"This is an important process because whereas 100 per cent of hernias diagnosed will be treated by operation in the UK, only less than 14 per cent will be treated by routine operation in Africa – and of those that are not treated there is a high mortality rate.

"The Operation Hernia team working with the Ghanaian doctors and nurses are seeking to reduce this mortality rate in this region dramatically."

Operation Hernia is a charity headed by Professor Andrew Kingsnorth, a colleague of Craig's at Derriford Hospital.

Craig added: "It is a very humbling experience seeing what the Ghanaians have to tolerate; they have so little resources and are so poorly equipped and funded.

"The team makes big differences by performing procedures, whilst teaching the local nurses, that we



● Lt Craig Brown, an operating theatre specialist at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth

Picture: LA(Phot) Ray Jones

take for granted in the UK."

The Operation Hernia foundation has built up strong links with the western region of the African country.

Achievements of the mission include educating the local health care professionals to reduce the spread of HIV and hepatitis, supplying equipment to the clinics, teaching patient-lifting and

handling techniques, and basic life support to reduce preventable deaths.

Craig is particularly keen to hear from ships that may be visiting the area to find ways to strengthen the links between the Royal Navy and the Ghanaian clinic.

Find out more on the official website www.operationhernia.org.uk.

Dibdobs and shrapnel

LEFT-OVER currency and nowhere to spend it led a sailor from Devonport ship HMS Northumberland to raise money for charity, Barnardo's.

LET Herewood Crane started the collection of coins from the many ports the warship visited during her four-month deployment in the Mediterranean.

Once he'd organised collecting tins and placed encouraging posters around the ship, Herewood set about pestering the ship's company to give him all their foreign change.

He said: "I decided to make this collection because I know charities collect foreign coins and with 160 people in the ship there were bound to be a lot of coins left over from our port visits.

"Choosing Barnardo's as the charity to receive the collection wasn't easy as a lot of charities deserve the same but I hope these coins make a real difference to the children."

The collection of £91 was presented to Sue Ferris, a representative for Barnardo's during the ship's recent maintenance period in Devonport.

...and a mission to Africa

THIS fallow period in the ship's sea-going life also offered the chance for seven sailors from HMS Northumberland's company to head out to Richard's Bay in South Africa to work on a children's orphanage as *Navy News* went to press.

The aim of the one-week mission is to improve the orphanage by refurbishing the kitchens, building a playground and laying paths to keep the children from walking on mud in winter.

Members of the team also gave practical lessons, ranging from health and hygiene issues to interactive dramas.

Fundraising went well with friends, family and the ship's company all giving very generously to raise £5,000 to buy the materials needed for the projects.

Project organiser Lt Cdr Stuart Somerville said: "Having returned from a civilian-run mission last year I realised what a fantastic undertaking this would be for the team in HMS Northumberland.

"The week is going to test our resilience, teamwork and organisation skills to the limit and in return I hope the experience is positive and life-changing for the team, the children, and the staff at the orphanage."

Follow their efforts online at www.southafricanprojectmar08.blogspot.com

A record racket

TWO records have been broken on the squash court at HMS Excellent, earning a place in the record books for two members of the Military Police Guard Service.

Pte Darrel Gilmore and L/Cpl Glen Dickson laboured long and hard under the watchful eye of MAA Gavin Moulds (pictured right) and two witnesses to achieve a record-breaking squash stint of 25 hours, 26 minutes.

Darrel said: "Once we got to 24 hours we knew we had secured a place in the Guinness Book of Records for the longest ever squash game, but we were told about the Racket Sports Record, so we continued on for another hour and 26 minutes in order to break another world record."

Fundraising from the squashathon will go to support the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).



Some va va voom on va va Victory



ALTHOUGH not the most mobile of Her Majesty's ships, Victory's crew are a little different – a team from the Flagship are determined to scale the mighty peaks of the four countries of Great Britain and Ireland in less than 48 hours.

The Va Va Victory team (pictured left) raised an impressive £31,500 last year, winning the trophy for the highest sum collected, and no doubt are determined to do even better this year. (Pledge your support online at www.justgiving.com/victory4peaks)

Although they might have some rivals; in amongst the 60 other teams competing to conquer the peaks of Ben Nevis, Helvellyn, Snowdon and Carantouhill are The Flyers, captained by former Royal Marine Terry Hislop, now a military consultant to the United Arab Emirates.

All money raised will go to Wooden Spoon, the rugby charity that is celebrating its silver jubilee in 2008 with fundraising events planned throughout the year. The charity is committed to helping mentally, physically and socially disadvantaged children.

Wooden Spoon are appealing for people to take part in this year's events. If a brisk walk doesn't suit you, then perhaps the traditional John O'Groats to Lands End cycle ride might appeal...

Find out more on www.spoonchallenges.com or 01889 582889.

Give as you live

THE Royal Navy has launched a new 'give as you earn scheme' to support all Naval Service charities through the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

In encouraging people to donate through their pay, the RN hopes to get as many people as possible giving monthly through their payroll to the Sports Amenities and Benevolence Scheme (SABS).

The slogan of the new scheme is "£1 per week – a lifetime of reward", because the money collected will benefit everyone in the wider Naval community, from serving people to veterans and their dependants.

If a serviceman or woman agrees to pay £1 a week, the actual cost to them is 78 pence, because the donation is deducted from their 'before-tax' pay.

Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns, Second Sea Lord, said at the scheme's launch: "If 75 per cent of serving people in the RN donated £1 a week to the SABS, we'd collect £1.5 million every year."

The three main areas to benefit from the scheme will be sport, amenities, and benevolence – financial help to those in need.

Money raised for sport will go on extras, such as equipment and coaching, and support to clubs and associations for serving people.

The amenities fund is designed to help service people relax when off-duty, and will pay for leisure items such as new televisions, media centres and games in ships and establishments. It will also help pay for Families' Days and activities which are not publicly funded.

The Benevolence fund will help both serving and ex-serving people and their dependants who find themselves in need. It will also help casualties and their families and will be able to supplement the £10,000 charity grant which is currently paid immediately in the event of a death in service.

The scheme has already been rolled out in HMS Raleigh and BRNC Dartmouth, and representatives will be visiting other establishments to explain the benefits of the new system.

For further information contacts the SABS manager, Julie Behan, on 023 9281 6508 or the Fleet charities officer, Frank Ward, on 023 9262 5247.

'Still firing guns in sheer defiance'

TWO Naval veterans are not letting ill fate or illness daunt them as they take on fundraising challenges in the spirit of the military in which they have served.

After 17 years enjoyable service in the Royal Navy as a Marine Engineer, boiler specialist, Vaughan Williams was proud when his son Arthur signed up for the military life as an elite green beret.

However a serious car accident smashed his son's spine in several places leaving him partially paralysed, and necessitating four months in the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries at Oswestry.

Vaughan said: "Arthur is slowly getting his life back together and at the moment is still a Royal Marine."

"Both the Royal Marines and his ship HMS Albion have been of immense support to him over the last year."

"They have shown the truth of the statement that the Royal Marines are more than a career but a family that always do their best to look after their own."

Vaughan admits that the debt to Oswestry can never be repaid but he is determined to try – the veteran intends to walk from John O'Groats to Lands End to raise money for the spinal unit at Oswestry and Spirit, a charity that supports research into spinal injuries and their treatment.

Find out more online at www.vaughanscharitywalk.co.uk or pledge through www.justgiving.com/vaughanwilliams.

Spinal injury is all too familiar to another Naval veteran, Barry O'Connell, who after injuring his back falling from a ladder ended up at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital at Stanmore.



● Vaughan Williams as a 'baby Tiff' in 1965

Last year Barry went through a full major thoracic spine operation, one of the first carried out in this country, where he died twice yet, to use Barry's memorable phrase, "they got the old boilers fired up after quite a struggle."

He went on: "The plain fact was I was told the only reason they carried out my operation was that I was mega fit and it paid off, as my spine specialist said when he knew of my Naval background."

"He told me that he had seen the film of the Graf Spee battle and that I was just like HMS Exeter, 'you vanish in a load of smoke and the officers on the other ships were amazed to see Exeter come out badly damaged, on fire, smoke pouring out of her, but still firing her guns in sheer defiance.'"

"The specialist then asked me how I got away with it. I just smiled and said 'Lady Luck.'"

Now clad in an exo-skeleton of

body armour, and fitted out with an impressive wheelchair that he has named the 'GR7 Harrier', the determined veteran has decided to raise money for the groups that have aided him in his injuries.

As *Navy News* went to press, Barry was due to take part in the Sport Relief mile, completing the distance in his GR7 Harrier while flying the White Ensign proudly at Colchester Garrison.

He said: "Being a Pongo area, I aim to represent the Senior Service by example leading from the front."

He is grateful for the support of his local RNA in Clacton, plus the RN and Fleet Air Arm who have provided him with clothing and stickers to keep the RN at the forefront of attention.

He added: "But one sticker says 'Hello sailor', which raises a few eyebrows – mind you, no ex-matelot has made an offer to me yet..."

As well as his fundraising efforts for the national Sport Relief charity, Barry has his eye set on bigger things: "If the Royals want me to assist them do various things like abseiling over bridges or down buildings, then count me in!"

"I am up for it in my wheelchair, I yearn for it and give me a chance to do something others say is impossible in the chair I will do."



● CPO David 'Tug' Wilson is cheered on by HMS Bulwark's commanding officer Capt Jeremy Blunden and shipmates

Tug rows, cycles and runs for lifeboat service

CPO David 'Tug' Wilson on board assault ship HMS Bulwark set himself a daunting challenge when he decided to complete a half-marathon in three separate disciplines – indoor rowing, cycling and running – in one marathon session.

Tug took on the commitment as part of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's 'Showing our support' national fundraising day.

Tug said: "As someone who works at sea, and also sails recreationally, the RNLI is an important charity to me."

"My brother is an ex-lifeboat crew member and now works full time for the RNLI so it is a charity that I have always supported."

"I am delighted to have been able to raise so much money for this very worthwhile cause and would like to thank everyone on board for their support throughout."

In total Tug has managed to raise over £1,048 – enough money to provide all the required safety and survival equipment for one lifeboat crew member.

Tug completed the challenge in four hours and 21 minutes, nine minutes inside his target time.



● Trainee Engineering Technician Brooke Wilson and her fellow trainees rub down the paintwork ready for repainting at Pengover Residential Home

Sailors head up the garden path

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh have visited a local residential home to create an inspirational and relaxing garden for residents.

The sailors began work at the home in January and Raleigh plans to send trainees to the home on a weekly basis over the next nine months.

The 'Up the garden path' project will see the sailors building a path, a dry stone wall and laying the foundations for a shed.

Hawke Division instructor PO Les Rust said:

"The trainees will probably have a maximum of two weeks with us before they start the next stage of their training, and during that time we look to put together a programme of activities to enhance the skills they have learned during basic training."

"Working at Pengover is an excellent way for them to put their team-working skills into practice while also interacting with the older people in the local community and helping to brighten their day."

Over 750 trainees will work on the project.



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BRITISH LIMBLESS EX-SERVICE MEN'S ASSOCIATION

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Tel: 020 8599 1124 Fax: 020 8599 2932
email: headquarters@limbless.org website: www.limbless.org

BLISMA aims to give ex-Service men and women who either lost limbs, the use of their limbs, or one or both eyes as a result of service or after service, in any branch of Her Majesty's Forces or Auxiliary Forces, a counselling and caring service and help in everyday problems. We also assist their needy dependants, in particular their Widows.

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75 YEARS OF SERVICE 1932 - 2007



● Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt receives his Junglie L-plates from 848 NAS instructor Capt Dave West RM
Picture: PO Sue Emery

Veteran cab drivers

ALTHOUGH a pilot by trade, Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt had to pick up his L-plates when he went for an aviation refresher package at RNAS Yeovilton.

The admiral, who will soon be taking charge of the Joint Helicopter Command, spent some

Defence college in top ten

WELBECK, the Defence Sixth-

form College, achieved a top ten rating from the A-level Performance System.

The independent body looked at the summer 2007 A-level results of students in 975 colleges and schools nationwide, and the defence college came tenth.

The college, which aims to educate students to become officers in the Armed Services or civil service, is the only college in the country where mathematics and physics are compulsory, and has only been at its new, purpose-build site in Leicestershire for two years.

time with the Sea King experts at 848 Naval Air Squadron – one of the four Commando Helicopter Force squadrons that will come under his control in the joint force.

The admiral flew the Sea King in general handling, and the more specialist Junglie aspects of low-level tactical navigation, confined areas, load-lifting and night vision goggle operations.

Rear Admiral Johnstone-Burt was heard to remark that it made a refreshing change from working in an office.

However one pilot at 848 NAS needs no refresher course – commanding officer Cdr Terry Tyack has notched up the impressive total of 4,000 hours of flying.

Since joining up in 1984, the officer has flown a range of aircraft types, including five different operational helicopters.

Upon landing after his 4,000th hour in the air the traditional celebration took place – a bottle of champagne and a ‘cooling-down’ from the squadron.

Celebrities hang out with the Navy

THE ROYAL Navy has been a bit of a media star in recent weeks. Ant and Dec paid a surprise visit to HMS Collingwood and children's TV presenter Andy Akinwolere tried his hand on the sinking ship simulator at HMS Raleigh.

Andy Akinwolere, from the BBC's *Blue Peter*, had the daunting task of facing the Royal Navy's multi-million pound simulator.

Andy joined recruits at HMS Raleigh for routine training on the simulator, known as Havoc. The training is part of the recruits' nine-week initial training course that helps prepare them for how to deal with floods and damage to the ship's hull.

During the training the simulator rocks from side to side and fills with water.

Before he stepped into the simulator Andy confessed to a fear of water, but the Navy won him over: "I get really nervous when I'm out of my depth. But I ended up having an exhilarating day."

"I learnt the importance of teamwork, and my team was exceptional," he said.

During the tough onslaught within Havoc, the trainees must work together to stem the flow of water through the breaches in the hull using wooden wedges and hammers.

They then have to shore up the bulkheads with timber to re-establish the watertight integrity of the ship.

CPO David Battersby, Havoc Senior Instructor, said: "The trainees and staff really enjoyed having Andy with us for the day; he did remarkably well in such a short period of time."

"During the exercise the simulator fills with around 70 tonnes of water and can tilt up to 20 degrees from vertical. Flooding on a ship at sea is one of the most dangerous situations to be in and this training is vital."

Ant and Dec have also been hanging out with the Navy

No1 in pen and clubz

HMS Monmouth's clubswinger LPT 'Pat' Patterson has been awarded the Tony Thyrtitt-Bettridge Memorial trophy as the best PTI across all ranks.

And Logs Lucy Gilston of HMS Ocean – a Writer in old speak – won the Writer of the Year award 2006-07 for the best overall performance at Raleigh.

Logistician (Personnel (Admin)) of the Year doesn't have quite the same ring, does it? – Ed

in practice for the *Ant vs Dec* challenge, in which they compete against each other in teams in the latest series of ITV's *Saturday Night Takeaway*.

They spent time in HMS Collingwood undergoing obstacle course training prior to tackling the real thing live on their show on the Saturday.

The celebrities – including Bonnie Langford, Debbie McGee, Melinda Messenger – tackled crossing over murky waters, climbing over a vertical wall, crawling through a dark tunnel and scrambling under and above a huge net.

Lt Steve Kelly, PTRO and organiser of the challenge said, "The whole experience was quite surreal."

"When the celebrities arrived at Collingwood on Tuesday, it was difficult to know how they would react to the challenge and the physical aspects involved."

"Fortunately we had great weather, which helped, and to their credit the teams cracked on and got stuck in, whether they were on the assault course or handling training on the field guns."

"Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and we gained an insight into what we were up against."

Saturday was a long day for everyone as it was spent rehearsing and making sure ITV were happy with the camera angles.

All their hard work paid off in the end as the whole event went smoothly and to plan.

Before they had to go out and compete against each other Ant and Dec watched clips from their training along with all the viewers of *Saturday Night Takeaway*.



● Dec (or is it Ant?) on the obstacle course at HMS Collingwood with actress Bonnie Langford
Picture: ITV

The live competition in the studio car park ran perfectly with Dec's team winning the event and that vital point.

Two weeks later the lads and their celebrity teams were back

with the Royal Navy when they headed to Austria to join forces with the successful RN and RM Bobsleigh team for a white-knuckle ride with the winter-sports heroes (see page 51).

Family ties

THE Navy is still a family affair with members meeting up around the globe.

Brothers AB(Sea) Lee and ET(ME) Steven Gilboy met while their ships (respectively Westminster and Edinburgh) were preparing for their transits south through the Suez Canal.

The brothers from St Athan in south Wales were thrilled to have the chance to spend some time together before setting off again with their deployments.

Lee said: "I knew we were both going to be deployed on Orion 08, but I never thought we'd get the chance to meet up. It was great showing my little brother around my new ship."

Meanwhile CPO Annette Laurie ended up training her son, AB Sam Furniss, at HMS Collingwood.

Annette was at the Fareham base for a short period, while her son Sam underwent operational training before joining colleagues in Iraq.

And down in HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, one trainee sailor had a surprise guest when he saw a very familiar face in the crowd.

Trainee AET Glenn Harris told his twin, Alex, that he would be unable to make it to his passing out parade, as he would be on duty at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

However, unbeknown to Alex, Glenn had obtained special permission from his instructors to travel back to HMS Raleigh to see his brother complete his training.

Glenn said: "It was fantastic to come back to Raleigh to surprise Alex. The look on his face when he saw me said everything."



● Steven and Lee Gilboy on HMS Westminster's forecastle



● Glenn and Alex Harris at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield



The Band of HM Royal Marines School of Music

conducted by Sir Vivian Dunn. The ever popular music by the two undisputed kings of march composition, John Philip Sousa and Kenneth J Alford. Included are *Colonel Bogey*, *The Thin Red Line*, *HM Jollies*, *The Standard of St George*, *On the Quarter Deck*, *The Great Little Army*, *Eagle Squadron*, *The Voice of the Gun*, *King Cotton*, *The Thunderer*, *El Capitan*, *Solid Men to the Front*, *Sound Off*, *The National Game*, *The Gladiator*, *The Gridiron Club* and many others

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Sure-footed at the AIB

NESTLING in a corner of HMS Sultan’s site sits the Admiralty Interview Board – whenever in the past we’ve done features on the AIB, we’ve tended to focus on the aspiring candidates, wobbling their way over water-filled tanks.

But if you are in the Naval service right now, then there’s a one in five chance you’ve been through it yourself.

However you may not know what it’s like to sit on the other side of that daunting desk. And that desk places heavy demands on both perspectives.

Cdr John Warden, board president, said: “It’s a huge responsibility here; the people that we recruit are the officers of the future.”

Board member Lt Mark Hamilton said: “I enjoy it because I have an influence over the future officers of the Navy.

“I think it’s exciting when you see a real star come through. You think to yourself ‘Hmm, is that a future Nelson?’

“This is not someone who is going to be a captain of industry, but a captain of one of our ships. That is so exciting.”

Gruelling as the three days undoubtedly are for the candidates to become officers in the RN, RFA or RM, it is also hard work for the officers sitting in judgement who must be able to back up their conclusions with fact.

Cdr John Warden admits: “It’s like doing a six-hour exam. We have to concentrate hard at every moment.”

For candidates undertaking the AIB, little has changed on the surface – although the imminent arrival of a new computer-based psychometric test might surprise the old and bold officers out there.

The fundamental structure of the AIB is much the same: candidates arrive at HMS Sultan on the first evening, and board and bond together in the AIB’s own specially-designed building.

The next day pulls them through a morning of psychometric tests, service knowledge questions and essay, before plunging them into the gym for the fitness trials of the bleep test and preparations for the next day’s physical challenges of the practical leadership task (think wobbly bridges and water-filled tanks...).

The final day begins with the short, sharp, but hopefully dry, shock of the bridge-building and chasm-swinging leadership tests, before the scenario exercise puts them through their paces in quick thought and seeks out alert minds.

Individual interviews then allow each candidate to put forward their own examples of leadership,



● Board members Lt Mark Hamilton, Cdr John Warden and Lt Cdr Victoria Dale-Smith assess candidates at the AIB

Picture: LA(Phot) Judy Hurst

teamwork and motivation from the world outside of the AIB.

The officers’ priority is to make sure that each candidate has equal chance to prove him or herself, that they treat each fairly and without favour.

Objectivity is key. The ‘cut of his jib’ is no longer a factor in officer selection.

The AIB brought in a rigorous competency-based system three years ago, and its success is now being proven in the hallways of Britannia Royal Naval College.

A recent validation process looked into Phase One training at Dartmouth and found a strong link between the AIB’s scoring and BRNC performance.

This examination will take place again as successful AIB candidates go on to complete Phase Two training and move into their first jobs as Young Officers.

The competency-based approach is judged against a solid framework which analyses candidates’ abilities in the areas of: effective intelligence; leadership potential; communication; courage and values; and motivation.

And in each of these areas, the candidates’ have at least two chances to prove themselves to weed out the disastrous effects of one-off poor performance.

Each score is debated hotly among the three Naval

officers who sit in judgement. Rank, while respected, is not ruler here. Lieutenant can disagree with commander, provided there is solid evidence for the debate.

Each score, each point, has to be justified from this evidence of candidate’s performance, not from perception.

All AIB officers undergo two days of intensive training by experts from Qinetiq to follow the strictures of evidence-based assessment.

Board president Cdr Mike Blowers admits: “When I came here I had to put aside my scepticism about competency-based assessment, but I was won over – as we all were.

“We all believe in the process. It is fair and it is consistent.”

Lt Cdr Victoria Dale-Smith said: “At the start of the course I thought there was no way I could keep objective. But actually you do. Because you have to treat each candidate as an individual.

“For me it is now second nature, although I thought it would go against my own nature. But actually it is very easy to achieve – in here, you switch off all your opinions to assess that candidate.

“We need to be objective. Otherwise the board president or other board member will pick me up and get me to justify my opinions from what we’ve seen.”

Cdr Warden added: “The key to objectivity is to stay competency-based, and now with the training, we can try to squeeze the subjectivity out of it.

“With three of us, if one forms an opinion, because the other two need to be convinced, that one has got to have the evidence to support it.”

“The hardest part for me is not encouraging the candidates,” commented Lt Cdr Dale-Smith, “We have to remain the grey men in the assessment.

“We’re all enthusiastic people here, we want to see them pass. You want to encourage them, but the candidates have to show their own true colours.”

The AIB recently came under the command of BRNC, but due to its nature, retains vital links with the Naval recruiters.

A move to the Dartmouth site is on the horizon once funding is found to bring all of the Board’s essential infrastructure with them.

Cdr Warden concluded with absolute confidence: “I’ve been here five months. And I don’t believe any candidate I have seen has gone away with the wrong result.”



● Cdr Phil Waterhouse greets Cdr Mike Clarke (left) with other former COs of the Defence Maritime Logistics School

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Silver celebration at Logistics School

THERE was a certain silvering of the hair amongst the officers gathered at HMS Raleigh to celebrate 25 years of the Defence Maritime Logistics School.

Current commandant Cdr Phil Waterhouse – whose grey hairs aren’t too obvious just yet – welcomed ten former commanding officers back to the establishment to see how the school has changed over the past decades.

When the school moved from its Chatham home to Raleigh in 1983 it was still known as the Royal Navy Supply and Secretariat School, training for Writers, Stores Accountants and Stewards.

Chef training moved from Aldershot to Raleigh just over a decade later to join with its natural allies in the supply branch.

Of course, these titles have recently been rebranded to Logisticians Personnel Administration, Supply Chain and Catering Services, for the sake of accuracy if not brevity.

Cdr Waterhouse said: “We now provide training in a modern and realistic environment to give our students the knowledge they need to meet

the challenge of today’s operations.

“Ultimately we want them to reap the reward of a successful career in both the logistics branch and the Royal Navy.

“What hasn’t changed over the past 25 years is the ethos of the school, its commitment to certain values and the standard we require.

“Regardless of their specialisation, we also seek to remind our students of their ultimate role – that is sailor first, ready to fight and win.”

Among the former COs who had a chance to look over the developments at the school was Cdr Mike Clarke, the first CO at the Raleigh site.

He said: “Logistics training is in excellent hands and very much in tune with modern tri-Service thinking.

“The staff at every rank are thoroughly professional. They were also remarkably enthusiastic, self-possessed and personable.

“It was of tremendous interest to see how the school had evolved over the last quarter of a century.”

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● *Endurance passes one of two huge icebergs she encountered on transit from Signy Island where she had picked up scientists who were closing down their base for the winter*
Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams, HMS Endurance

A long way from home

TEN thousand miles, to be precise – as Britain’s second most senior admiral discovered.

Numerous Commanders-in-Chief Fleet have attempted to visit HMS Endurance ‘in the field’ – but have been thwarted by distance and programmes. Luckily, the latter fell into place for Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope – but the distance remained immense.

CinC Fleet makes a point of getting around as much of the RN and RM as possible to hear the views of men and women on the ground, assure them their deeds are valued, and to gain a better understanding of the Senior Service’s manifold and varied global commitments.

None of those commitments adequately compares with the unique mission of the Red Plum. And so the admiral flew to 67°S to the British Antarctic Survey base of Rothera to join the ice survey ship in the shadow of a glacier. “It’s hard to understand exactly what Endurance does unless you see her in her area of operations – her

remit is so large and complex,” explained Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner, the ship’s doctor.

Admiral Stanhope had just 48 hours to understand that complex remit. He began with a visit to Blaiklock Island, where BAS scientists are studying the long-term effects of climate change by analysing moss samples and the invertebrates which live in it. The admiral was also shown some minute larvae which had been found for the first time – and which may prove to be an entirely new species.

Blaiklock is home not merely to the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth, but also to penguins, like much of the fringe of Antarctica. In Blaiklock’s case, it’s a colony of adelic penguins and at this time of year, the birds are moulting ready to spend the months of the austral winter in the sea.

And Blaiklock is home too to an old research hut, abandoned now save for fuel and supplies should any explorers or scientists become stranded on the island. It also houses a visitors’ book with comments going back half a century. There is now a fresh entry:

21st Feb 2008. Commander-in Chief Fleet-UK Navy. A once-in-a-lifetime visit for someone in my position to ensure HMS Endurance continues to contribute to Science and Diplomacy in the Antarctic.

The trip to Blaiklock done, the admiral was flown over icebergs and the odd minke whale back to Rothera, where he was met by Lt Stuart Long and his team who had been conducting surveys of the waters around the base.

Then it was into the BAS base for a tour of the facilities – and especially the aquarium.

Thanks to the extreme cold and high oxygen levels in Antarctic waters, marine life here grows to giant proportions: a water louse can be as big as your hand, and water spiders and starfish are invariably huge.

After an evening back aboard Endurance chatting with the ship’s company, Admiral Stanhope departed for his headquarters in Portsmouth.

And when he got there, he sent a signal to the Red Plum to thank the sailors and marines for their efforts:

I was truly impressed by the professional manner each and every task I witnessed was conducted from flying, through survey to scientific support and equally by your people conducting them.

The focus and enthusiasm for your business was very obvious in all to whom I spoke and the upbeat nature of your team was consequently of no surprise. It was great fun.

I know of no other CinC Fleet in the recent past to visit you in the Antarctic, although many have tried. I was most fortunate and privileged that it all came together.

The admiral is not the only one to leave the ice. The Red Plum has completed her spell in Antarctica for this season now.

She will, however, remain in the Southern Hemisphere throughout the austral winter, including paying a visit to South Africa, before resuming survey work around the frozen continent towards the end of the year.



● *Just chillin’... A couple of seals loll about on a small iceberg alongside a small colony of Emperor penguins*
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow, HMS Endurance

'Farewell, we'll meet again'



THE arrows and their crossbow are still discernible, the name HUNTER still legible, the final resting place of a British destroyer – lost off Narvik nearly 70 years ago – has been discovered by the Norwegian Navy.

Lying 300 metres (985ft) beneath the surface of Ofotfjord, half a dozen miles west of the Arctic port, Hunter entombs more than 100 men, killed when the ship clashed with German destroyers in these narrow waters on April 10 1940.

Hunter had charged into Narvik with four sisters, determined to oust the Germans who had occupied the town the day before.

They caught the enemy by surprise and raised hell for the first hour or so, but as the Kriegsmarine responded, so Hunter was crippled by the German destroyer George Thiele which pummeled the British warship at close range.

From 30kts, Hunter crashed to an immediate halt in the middle of the fjord at the mercy of the German guns.

She was probably already doomed, but ill-fortune now conspired with German gunnery. In the chaos of battle, HMS Hotspur suddenly found Hunter dead ahead.

Unable to avoid her sister, she sliced into Hunter with a sickening crunch which echoed around the fjord.

The mortally-wounded Hunter now began to sink rapidly. Her siren howled one last time as the boilers died and around 6.45am on that fateful Wednesday, the destroyer sank. Of her crew of 145, 108 were killed.

And there she has lain undisturbed and unlocated for more than six decades until HNOMS Tyr was surveying the fjord, looking for mines as part of major winter war games, Armatura Borealis (see the centre pages).

After 14 fruitless hours of searching, her echo sounder picked up the hull of a sunken vessel on the bed of Ofotfjord and she sent down her robot mini submarine to investigate.

The crystal-clear pictures the craft sent back confirmed the wreck was the Hunter.

Hunter was one of two British destroyers lost in the first Battle of Narvik.

HMS Hardy was also wrecked; her Commanding Officer Capt Bernard Warburton-Lee received the Victoria Cross posthumously for his leadership that day.

Sixty-eight years later, Warburton-Lee's last battle cry was hoisted aboard amphibious assault ship HMS Albion – *Continue engaging the enemy* – as a procession of Allied warships,

four British – HM Ships Albion, Bulwark, Cornwall and RFA Mounts Bay – and one Norwegian Coastguard vessel – NOCGV Andenes – formed a line and sailed past the wreck site, each ship paying her respects by casting wreaths into the icy waters and pouring a tot of rum over the side.

As the force left Ofotfjord behind, the Aldis lamps flashed into life as a final tribute: F A R E W E L L W E ' L L M E E T A G A I N.

"Finding HMS Hunter was a poignant moment and being able to pay our respects along with our Norwegian and Dutch allies is particularly fitting to those who lost their lives," said Major General Garry Robison RM, Commander of the UK's Amphibious Force.

"It was a very moving ceremony. Sadly, we were not able to bring over the three veterans that served on HMS Hunter. But we shall certainly take the opportunity to let them have the films and the photographs of that ceremony."

Former seaman Fred Ward (pictured, right, in his RN days), now aged 88, is one of those survivors.

"I have mixed emotions about the events of over 68 years ago and the loss of so many fine friends," he said.

"I now have a great sense of relief knowing the final resting place of my comrades and our ship. My only sadness is that I wasn't able to attend the ceremony to pay my own personal tribute."

Fellow former shipmate Able Seaman James Renshaw, today 89, added: "I lost 100 friends and 'family members' when she went down."

"Not a day has passed that I have not thought about her and the people we left behind."

Covered in oil, Hunter's survivors trod water in the bitterly-cold fjord until they were picked up by the Germans.

They were eventually repatriated – but only after signing an agreement not to take up arms against the Third Reich again.

The Norwegians had spent several years trying to find Hunter's wreck; now they have discovered it, it will be officially marked as a war grave.

Hunter was not the only loss of the ill-fated Norwegian campaign honoured by today's sailors during

● **Sailors and Marines line up on HMS Albion as they prepare to lay wreaths to the men of HMS Hunter**

Picture: Surg Lt Cdr Anthony Dew, HMS Albion

● **(Right) Hunter's ship's badge, still clearly identifiable after nearly seven decades below the water and (below right) a cluster of .5 calibre machine-guns point forlornly skywards on Hunter's wreck**

Video stills: Royal Norwegian Navy



Armatura Borealis.

Bound for northern Norway to take part in the exercise, HM Ships Bulwark and Cornwall and RFA Mounts Bay sailed over the wrecks of aircraft carrier Glorious and her escorting destroyers Ardent and Acasta.

The trio were returned to the UK as British forces pulled out of Norway when they were pounced on by battle-cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau about 180 miles west of Harstad.

All three were sunk in a two-hour battle, although Acasta severely damaged Scharnhorst with a torpedo hit and both German ships were damaged by shellfire.

Of Ardent's and Acasta's ship's companies, only one man survived from each destroyer; barely 40 men were picked up from HMS Glorious.

On a freezing February day in 2008, Bulwark's ship's company mustered on the flight deck as the assault ship's senior rating, Executive Warrant Officer Russ Williams, dropped a wreath into the ocean and the ship's chaplain Tim Wilkinson led a service of remembrance.

■ **Heroes of the Royal Navy, page 12**

And farewell to Ginger too

CLEARANCE divers honoured the last wish of one of the doyens of their branch when they cast the ashes of Arthur 'Ginger' Bryant over the spot where his comrades lay.

The White Ensign on HMS Chiddingfold was lowered to half mast, Flag Alpha – 'I am conducting diving operations' – hoisted and the minehunter's crew lined the upper decks over the wreck of battleship HMS Barham.

Here, 66 years before Ginger had been one of 450 men rescued when the battleship was torpedoed by U331 in the eastern Mediterranean; 861 comrades were not so fortunate.

Chiddingfold's dive team embarked in the ship's RIB as the Still sounded over the water and Dvr Moger scattered Ginger's ashes before Lt Paul Hursthouse laid a wreath on the spot – all in accordance with Ginger's will.

When Barham sank, Ginger was a 20-year-old leading seaman who had been bombed, torpedoed and shipwrecked once before.

He would subsequently serve in the Atlantic and Arctic on convoy duties. It was only post war that he became a diver, subsequently being called upon to dive on the wreck of the submarine Affray.

In the mid-50s Ginger was in charge of the diving training centre on Horsea Island – a job which was interrupted by the Suez crisis; he headed to Egypt to salvage wrecks at Port Said.

He retired from the Senior Service as a chief petty officer in 1966 and ran a pub in Essex for the next 15 years, where his diver's helmet and boots enjoyed pride of place. He also swam regularly – he took his final dip at the age of 86 last summer.

Remembering today's dead

DOCUMENTARY makers are hoping family and friends of those lost in Iraq and Afghanistan will help them complete a three-hour film.

The BBC has commissioned the programme to honour the lives of the fallen through words, photographs, video footage and interviews with comrades, friends and relatives.

The programme makers intend to feature every serviceman and woman who has died in either conflict.

If family members, friends or former colleagues feel they can contribute in some way – there is no obligation to be involved in the actual film and conversations would be in confidence – they can contact Rachel Noar or David Brindley at Minnow Films on 0207 741 0105 or by email: david@minnowfilms.co.uk or rachel@minnowfilms.co.uk.

Serving personnel should seek permission from their COs if they wish to contribute.

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Chart and shoal of RN

IN MANY ways, it was something of a minor miracle that so many men o'war managed to negotiate Spithead or the Hamoaze in the days of sail.

For the surveyors who charted the safe passages through shoals and around headlands were not formally trained; they were taught their vital skills at sea by their elders (though not necessarily better).

If you were lucky enough to have been tutored by James Cook or one of his talented proteges then there was a fair chance that the charts you produced would endure.

After all, some of Cook's charts of the South Pacific were still in use in the mid-20th century.

But the duffers at the other end of the scale might have better been left to plumb lines in the deep oceans, where they could not have caused much damage, rather than passing on their poor grasp of a complex subject.

The knowledge gained on an *ad hoc* basis by these budding hydrographers was limited compared to that possible in today's Hydrographic, Meteorological and Oceanographic Training Group (HMTG), and the technology available to modern surveyors would astonish Cook and his colleagues – indeed, the capability of a ship like HMS Scott in terms of data-gathering is astonishing whatever your perspective.

The deep ocean survey ship can cover 150 square kilometres an hour, following precise satellite-plotted survey lines hundreds of miles long before wheeling round to double back on a parallel path.

The value of the work done by Scott and her various sister ships to the Royal Navy, as well as the merchant fleets of the world, has always been immense, and that remains the case in 2008.

It was as a result of advances in technology during World War 2 that formal classroom training came into favour, allowing students to learn the theory before testing themselves on the water.

Hydrography is the measurement, study and analysis of bodies of water and the margins of land, particularly with regard to safe navigation.

Generally it includes the gathering of data about water depth, tides, currents, the nature of the sea bed and the measurement of prominent and relevant features ashore, either for navigational or military purposes.

Or, as Lt Cdr Pat Mowatt, Hydrographic Training Officer, put it: "This is a vital warfare specialisation. It is about gathering environmental data to optimise sensors and weapons."

He continued: "This is a very very useful skill, not just in a warfare sense, but generally."

"They are skills useful in military and wider aspects. And because we all speak the same language we can understand each other – these people are very employable outside."

"It is very attractive for a young person coming in from outside the branch – here is an opportunity to gain an excellent skill and external qualifications and spend some time in the RN and put it all into practice."

"Then, looking ahead, they can say: 'I am being provided with something which I could use further on in my life' – and many people do."

"A high proportion of surveyors and HMs leave and go to work for civilian organisations in similar fields."

"And look at the ships we have. Crews are rotated, they spend a lot of time away, it's very hi-tech, very comfortable, there are fantastic programmes, and you are right at the tip of exercises and operations."

Lt Cdr Mowatt added that he was not advocating training up then swiftly jumping ship.

"I cannot for the life of me understand why people want to leave – this branch offers everything that someone could want from the Navy," he said.

"Great visits, great ships, great skills. I think it's a fantastic way to go."

"Our ships haven't got the missile systems – they do not look like frigates or destroyers – but they are warships."

"These are military people doing military jobs – a vital part of the warfare environment."

Recognition of that fact came when the old Surveying Squadron colour scheme of white hulls and buff funnels was replaced by Pusser's grey, bringing them visibly into line with the rest of the Fleet.

The role of hydrography has been strengthened by the RN overhaul of amphibious capability over the past decade or so, allowing surveyors to prove their worth over and over again in recent times.

For example, in 2003 veteran coastal survey ship HMS Roebuck was approaching the end of a three-month deployment to the southern Gulf, and facing the axe on her return to the UK.

But as war loomed in the region, she was diverted to the northern Gulf and her deployment extended.

In less than six weeks the little ship surveyed the main amphibious landing zone – an area larger than Hampshire – and plotted everything on the sea bed larger than a coffee table.

Her crew continued to gather data until the day before the invasion, and with the ship able to produce her own paperwork, new sets of charts were printed on board and distributed to Allied warships as soon as the data had been analysed.

Hydrographers discovered deeper water inshore than older charts indicated, which meant that aircraft carriers and assault

ships could move closer in, reducing helicopter flight times by ten minutes and speeding up the airborne assault.

Roebuck later went on to clear the route to Umm Qasr for humanitarian aid, and surveyed the port itself – the first such work carried out in 40 years.

Even in the 21st century some RN survey work is pioneering in nature – no survey data has been gathered for sections of the African coast, for example, and part of the task of HMS Antarctica is to probe the waters around Antarctica for hidden dangers, providing safe routes for the burgeoning deep-south cruise market.

The key to military success is preparation, and Lt Cdr David Wyatt, who is head of the Hydrographic Unit at the HMTG, cites the Australian experience in East Timor as a classic example of the important role his students will one day play in their navy.

"Going into East Timor was described as 'the biggest Australian amphibious operation since D-Day' by one of their admirals," said Lt Cdr Wyatt.

"They did all the planning, then checked the preferred beach and discovered that they could not use it."

"In just one night they found an alternative beach, surveyed it and allowed the amphibious force to go in without incident."

Apart from Endurance in the Southern Ocean, almost all the efforts of the rest of the survey ships are directly in support of military tasks, so newly-trained sailors and officers are genuinely one step from vital front-line duty when they emerge from the doors of the HMTG.

But it is not all about humming number-crunching computers in calm 'mission spaces' – lean-manned ships such as Echo and Enterprise still require some more traditional sailor skills such as watchkeeping, machine gunner and boat crew.



● (Above) Surveyor recorders set up a tide pole just off a shallow beach in Antarctica; HMS Endurance's motor boat James Caird can be seen in the background
Picture: PO(Phot) Chris Brick

● (Left) Pictured on Nimrod, one of Endurance's motor boats, LS(SR) Kerry Collins (left), LET 'Robbie' Robinson and AB(HM) Lee Churchill took data on tidal flows over a two-day period at the tricky entrance to Deception Island at the beginning of this year
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow

● (Below) CPO Dave Sharp carries out survey work at the British Antarctic Research Base Rothera earlier this year, with HMS Endurance far left of the picture
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow



**Next month
– Looking to
the skies**

Cold fleet

HMS CORNWALL is used to playing a supporting role.

She is a frigate, after all – and although as a Type 22 she is more than capable of acting as flagship (most recently for the Allied CTF 158 task force in the Gulf) she continues the RN tradition of frigates as workhorses of the Fleet.

But that is not the case with HMS Ark Royal.

She is a *bona fide* Death Star, the soubriquet given by smaller ships to the carriers, which suck in all the attention and leave others in their shadow.

But

this time the Ark is also playing a supporting role, as a helicopter carrier to the assault ship twins Albion and Bulwark which led Exercise Armatura Borealis along the coast of Norway.

While Bulwark was flagship for Commander Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Peter Hudson, Albion acted as command ship for the maritime component commander of the exercise, Maj Gen Gary Robison RM, Commander UK Amphibious Force.

So, a back seat for the Ark then?

Far from it. You name it, they got it – air attacks, fast boat attacks, submarine attacks; just about the only thing not thrown at the task group was a cavalry charge.

On top of that the carrier was supporting 824 Naval Air Squadron's operational training, so squadron engineers, aviators and the carrier's flight deck crew had to endure bitter cold and long dark hours while ensuring the aircraft were up to the task – and the Merlins, once airborne, played their part in tracking 'enemy' submarines and fast attack craft, as well as ferrying people.

One of those underwater threats was a British T-boat (main picture) which probed the task force's defences as the assault ships prepared to deliver their cargo of Royal Marines ashore.

So, back to Cornwall, given the job of supporting the landings, providing gunfire support and protecting the capital ships.

She was also a well-armed forward operating base for 3 Commando Brigade as she had her own force of 80 green berets – most accommodated on camp beds in the hangar.

It was quite a change from last year's eventful deployment to the Gulf, as noted by her CO, Cdr Jeremy Woods.

"The difference in conditions between our operations last year and on Exercise Armatura Borealis now could not be greater, but this really illustrates the flexibility of a capable ship such as HMS Cornwall, and the relevance of naval power in the modern world."

"We are just as at home up here, working close inshore, putting troops on the beach in the dead of night while fighting off an air raid, as we were protecting the oil platforms in the Gulf."

With the end of the exercise the 25 vessels of various nations went their separate ways.

For Ark that means a brief stopover in Scotland before she deploys to America to work with the US Marine Corps.


Pictures: PO(Phot) Jonathan Hamlet



● The Northern Lights illuminate Ark Royal



● HMS Cornwall in Norwegian waters



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Ice cold



DARKNESS rules. Distant lights of scattered houses struggle to punctuate the night sky that is rent by the milky-green slash of the Aurora Borealis.

A hand pressed to the window in Flyco can feel the warm air that slews down the glass to ward off a fractal screen of ice.

HMS Bulwark is in Norway, along with her sister ships Albion, Ark Royal, Mounts Bay, and Cornwall, being put through her paces amid the fjords and mountainous isles of the Scandinavian country's Arctic north in Exercise Armatura Borealis.

Bulwark has emerged from the cocoon of refit to become the high readiness amphibious flagship and Norway is where she is testing her wings.

And it's not just the ship which is being brought back to speed. Almost three-quarters of the assault ship's company have joined the warship in her fallow period in the hands of DML at Devonport Naval Base – including her commanding officer Capt Jeremy Blunden.

"This is the first time I've been involved in amphibious warfare as commanding officer," he said.

"I've never done this sort of stuff before, so I'm learning as well – as much as the AB who joined the ship last week.

"We are new to the game, we are learning how to do this. This exercise is the final proving ground for HMS Bulwark as amphibious flagship. Out here we are proving to ourselves that we can maintain and sustain the ship in a higher state of readiness.

"We have had to hone our warfighting skills."

Heading up the ships involved in the wargames off the coast of Norway, Cdre Peter Hudson, Commander Amphibious Task Group, is no stranger to the Navy's newest assault ships.

He said: "Since I commanded HMS Albion there has been a staggering leap in capability in both Albion and Bulwark.

"This challenging environ-

ment allows us to really stretch these ships. And more lessons will continue to be learnt and these ships will continue to evolve."

Armatura Borealis has brought together four of the Royal Navy's weighty amphibious ships – HMS Bulwark, HMS Albion, RFA Mounts Bay and HMS Ark Royal (in her converted helicopter assault ship role), into the somewhat cramped confines of Norway's Arctic coastline.

The British amphibious ships are bolstered by various other nations, including a Dutch task group featuring HNLMS Rotterdam – the inspiration for the RFA's Bay class – and two Belgian minehunters.

In addition, a British and a Norwegian submarine patrol the clear waters and Type 22 HMS Cornwall bolsters the power of the Task Force.

Away from the ships, the shores of Norway throng with clusters of Royal Marines from many units, but predominantly 45 Commando – all enjoying the bracing pleasures of Arctic training in the Scandinavian ice and snow; and nestled amid the mountains beyond, the men and women of the Commando Helicopter Force are flourishing amid the rigours of their Clockwork deployment to Bardufoss' climactic challenges.

These weeks of exercises have brought almost 4,000 RN, RM and RFA personnel up to Harstad and its surrounding regions.

This is the first taste of the Arctic for many people on board Bulwark, and although the ship had played host to the battle staff 18 months earlier, it was in the very different conditions of the Gulf.

In fact, the warm seas of the Mediterranean and east of Suez are the expected environments of much of the Navy's fleet in current global operations, not the Arctic which recalls the legacy of the long-ended Cold War.

"It compels us to think harder, think deeper, think laterally," said Cdre Hudson.

He added: "We have an impressive amphibious task group, with elements of the

Although the Cold War ago, war in the cold is : the Royal Navy and Mar skills. Exercise Armatu the Navy's amphibious f Arctic Circle. Helen Crav ship HMS Bulwark as pace.

Royal Navy held at high readiness, at the forefront of contingent capability.

"If we are to keep that capability recharged and fresh, we need to do challenging exercises like this."

It's a point echoed by Bulwark's CO: "We are proving our ability to operate in cold climates.

"We are a worldwide Navy, capable of operating in all conditions, whether arctic, temperate or jungle. We are proving we have the full range of capabilities in those conditions.

"We are revisiting lessons from previous deployments, maintaining the level of experience across the Royal Navy – should we be called to a crisis to somewhere like this, we have a body of expertise that could mount any operation.

"These exercises are few and far between, we need to make use of training opportunities when they come up."

So up on the bridge of the assault ship the navigating team are working long hours keeping a wary eye on the 'opportunities' offered by the Narvik coastline.

To quote Douglas Adams' Slartibartfast, the "lovely crinkly edges" leave little room to manoeuvre for ships of the size of the amphibious task group – a fact cheerfully acknowledged by Bulwark's Navigator Lt Cdr Chris Nelson: "In the Channel if something happens you can simply turn right and head out to sea. You won't hit land for at least 20 miles."

He indicates the snow-covered land visible from each of bridge windows, "Here it's challenging because there simply isn't an escape route."

Lt Adam Ballard, the deputy navigator on board Bulwark,

pictures: la(phot) pepe hogan, po(phot) jonathan ha





n Norway

ended over a decade still a theatre for which lines hone their fighting ra Borealis has drawn fighting forces up to the ven reports from assault the exercise gathers

admits: “It is very well charted up to ¼ mile off the beach. But that’s where we like to go. And there are some uncharted small rocks out there...”

“It has very extreme polar weather,” he added. “The visibility can be absolutely clear, but then ten minutes later, a massive snowstorm sweeps in and there’s no visibility.”

“We’re suddenly confronted with the fact that we can’t see anything.”

“This is our first big tester,” said Lt Cdr Nelson. “A significant number of senior people have changed around. But the sailors are on a four or five year draft to the ship – they have stacks of experience.”

For now the exercise is in the Wader package, as movements and transfers are practised in advance of the onslaught of the Raider phase.

“It becomes less scripted – that’s when we start earning our pay,” commented Lt Cdr Nelson wryly.

Of course, the dramatic changes in weather are not just an issue for the navigators on board the warship; the challenges of the cold are a theme running through the heart of the ship, from the upper-deck and seaboard teams who operate in it, to the weapon engineers who require their equipment to operate in it, down to the chefs who have to cater for those who operate in it.

Not to mention the issues that come when a ship’s company is practically doubled with an embarked military force (EMF) and battle-staff, all with specific physical and technical requirements.

“It’s a really good test for all the equipment we have. The ship’s company don’t fully loadtest the system. When the

battlestaff arrive they push it to the limit,” said deputy weapons engineering officer Lt Mark Quinn pragmatically.

“The key is good early communication and a lot of planning. The other big challenge for the team is getting the equipment downtime to maintain the kit with so many more users on board.”

“There’s a huge challenge involved,” said Capt Blunden. “Reacting to the embarked staff and EMF, giving them the communications support that they need, a huge amount of IT support, that we can feed them and sustain them, operate the boat groups to land at a high tempo, logistics support to the EMF, medical and engineering support. Just keeping track of all this is task enough.”

“It places quite a strain on certain parts of the ship, cooking for a larger number of people, sustaining them. It’s feed, maintain, support – simple things like being able to provide enough hot water for them so that they can shower.”

“Bringing the whole of that together is really quite a challenge. We’re trying to plan ahead, think about all of the ‘what ifs’.

“And so far it has worked extraordinarily well.”

Planning began months before the assault ship headed north – lessons learnt from other ships in the Arctic were checked, a flurry of orders for protective cold-weather clothing despatched, the grease for the guns switched for a freeze-resistant brand, briefing on cold weather injuries, the list goes on...

But the fine detail of the preparations have paid off in the cold. CPO(AH) Andy Lewis looks out over his domain, Bulwark’s flightdeck: “The cold conditions were a shock to the system, but we were well-briefed.”

“Obviously it’s a very tiring environment – an hour out here makes you incredibly tired. But with flight awareness, you have to stay alert all the time.”

“But this is a close-knit team and we’re all keeping an eye on one another.”

Once the ship earnt her ‘blue

nose’ on arrival in the Arctic, routines changed as the deck teams had to limit their exposure to the cold atmosphere and the galleys whacked up the number of warming hot meals.

These are the same logisticians who are dealing with a ship’s company almost doubled with the EMF, and when absent from the galley or offices can be found monitoring the dock, hauling ropes as the ship comes alongside, or veiled by masks in firefighting gear.

WO Nick Battley, logistics officer catering services, admitted: “This stage of the exercise has a relatively stable notice of people moving. When it goes into free play, then it’s all very short notice – and our numbers change dramatically.”

“But the watchword of the catering services department is flexibility. Always has been, always will be.”

Royal Marines being Royal Marines, the green berets of 4 Assault Squadron, Bulwark’s resident landing craft unit, are relishing the Arctic experience.

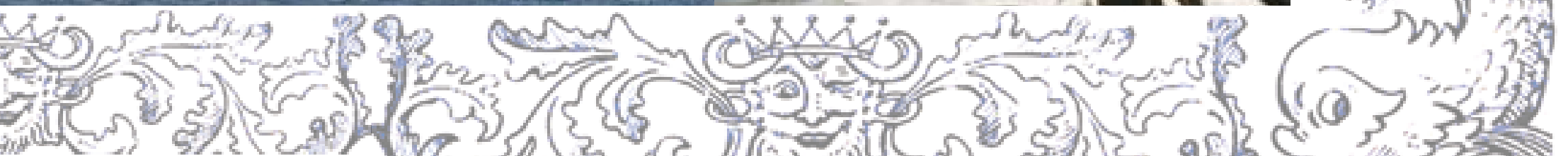
“I love it. Out here we get to do the things we’re meant to do – hitting the beaches, getting the lads and vehicles ashore,” said Mne Marty Barrett.

As the exercise draws on to the main drama, Bulwark’s CO is clear on what it will show: “Bulwark is back in the front line as the high readiness LPD.

“Her company are well trained, well motivated and ready to undertake any task.

“That’s what the Royal Navy does; that’s what this ship is capable and ready to do.”

● *Pictures from top left: A view from the cockpit over Norway; 4ASRM landing craft carry tracked vehicles to the Harstad shore; clearing snow from the flightdeck of Ark Royal; ET(WE) Sam Roberts wraps up warm to man the minigun on Ark Royal; RFA Mounts Bay, NOCGV Andenes, HMS Cornwall, HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion; the snow falling on Bulwark’s flightdeck; and HMS Cornwall on officer of the watch manoeuvres*



42 and 45 at 30° below zero



● *Waders of the lost Arctic... Royal Marines of 45 Commando conduct wader drills on an isolated Norwegian beach during Armatura Borealis*
Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon, 45 Cdo

WE HAVE deliberately chosen to focus on the 'skimmer' input to this year's exercises in the Arctic Circle rather than the Royal Marines who traditionally grab the headlines in Norway.

The Royals were there in force again in 2008 – a good 1,500 of them.

So it would be unfair and rather rude to ignore them. Plus they have big guns and wield daggers...

With 40 Commando locked in mortal combat with the Taleban, it fell to 42 and 45 Commandos to grapple with the joys of fighting in the most unforgiving of environments under the umbrella of their parent unit, 3 Commando Brigade.

Many of the green berets are Arctic veterans (some were on their tenth trip); others were Arctic virgins, which meant earning their blue noses and a bit more to boot.

Veterans need reminding and novices need teaching about living in such bitter cold, so training for the Royals was split into three distinct phases – survival, mobility and combat – in the three-week Cold Weather Warfare Course.

Survival comes first: experienced RM mountain leaders teach their 'flock' the basics of life in the Arctic, leaving weapons firmly at home. Avoiding cold-weather injuries such as frostbite, coping with avalanches, maintaining kit – all these nuggets of information based on more than half a century of operating in Norway were imparted by the mountainmen.



The ski (or pusser's plank) is key to mobility in the snow. It is not only man which moves by ski, but also much of his kit. Four-man teams haul the bare necessities – tents, stoves, food, fuel – on sledges, known as pulks. Pulks are heavy – and add to the commando's already onerous burden; the Bergen packs on the men's back can weigh up to 100lb fully loaded.

Luckily, there are man-made beasts to ease the burden. The BV tracked vehicles are tried and tested kit.

They can tow up to 16 men at a time in a manoeuvre known as 'ski jorring'.

So, we've mastered survival and moving, time for the fighting. Everything is slower and more cumbersome in the Arctic: breaking contact on skis, for example, is far more physically demanding than in a temperate environment. Still, by the end of three weeks of rigorous training, the Royals were able to conduct 'attacks' in company strength.

And as the old Royals' saying goes: If you can fight and survive in Norway, you can do it anywhere.

Of course, not all the Royals slither around on skis or skulk in foxholes carved out of the Norwegian snow.

There is a sizeable contingent with the amphibious force: Albion and Bulwark each have a permanent RM assault squadron.

Moving from ship to shore is always a challenge, a challenge which intensifies among the fjords in winter.

A small team is sent inshore initially in small boats to conduct a recce, which includes sending two swimmers into the water (briefly, admittedly, given the temperature in the Arctic).

Thanks to good charts, the Royals know the rough outline of the shore, but for accuracy manual soundings are needed from those swimmers.

Once they're happy, they mark up potential landing sites with white or infra-red lights.

"It's good to get on the beach and crack on. Every situation is different, we've got to try to second guess what will be thrown at us every day," explained beach master C/Sgt David Bartholomew of 4 Assault Squadron RM.

"In five minutes it can close right down and potentially we're looking at a survival situation. "Batteries, navigation aids, GPS – the cold sucks power straight out of them. We keep the vehicles running to keep the batteries charged."

● *Fire in the night... The mortar troop of 42 Commando let rip with their weapon hauled on a BV trailer at the Porsangmoen range*
Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner, 42 Cdo

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner, 42 Cdo



Doges' dilemma

THANK you all for your responses to my picture of the ship in front of the Doges' Palace.

I had a letter from Mr Gladden, who lives in Great Yarmouth and was a stoker mechanic on board at the time.

It is HMS Liverpool in the middle of January 1949, he also has an exact copy of that picture.

— Tom Hay, Turriff, Aberdeenshire

Letters are still coming in, with Liverpool and Sheffield being the front-runners. The clincher for me is a letter from Lt Mark Vet, Fighter Controller 1 in HMS Liverpool. He was reading Navy News while having his lunch in the wardroom (as you do) and noticed the exact same photograph on the bulkhead. So as he said, it's definitely Liverpool — or his ship has got the wrong picture — Ed

T-boat target practice

ITOO have a set of photographs of HMS Ausonia being torpedoed by practice torpedoes. It took place as part of a 'families' day.

Unfortunately after dropping the families off and setting off for Greece we had a luboil failure to one of the engine bearings and we were towed back to Malta for repairs, on completion of which we brought her home for scrap.

Our submarine squadron, in my time on her in 1963-64, was S/M5 and consisted of Tiptoe, Turpin and Thermopylae, as Tiptoe was in the dockyard at Malta, being 'stretched' the torpedoes would have been fired by either Turpin or Thermopylae.

— Brian Wilkinson, Kingswood, Bristol

...THANK YOU for the wonderful memory that your photo of HMS Ausonia being attacked by dummy torpedoes off Malta in 1964 brought back.

At the time I was a 21-year-old stoker on watch down the engine room, and remember the chief ERA telling me to 'gag' the trips on the steam generator in case they tripped out during the attack.

Even though we had been warned, when the torpedo hit the engine room port hull plating the bang was terrific and I can assure you that we all needed a change of underwear!

Thanks once again for the memory of a very happy ship.

— Peter Lambourne, Rochester, Kent

Wrong guy

THERE is a slight error in *The Grove Review* (March).

Your *Ship* was not written by Capt Guy Hodgkinson, but by Lt Cdr R H (Hugh) Hodgkinson, the recent CO of HMS Pythley, who left the Navy soon afterwards to become a very successful schoolmaster.

When I became CinC Western Fleet in 1970 I reissued this booklet, re-edited and brought up to date by Captain (later Vice Admiral Sir) Roderick MacDonal, the then Captain of the Fleet.

— Admiral Sir William O'Brien
Prof Grove was grateful to have this additional information — Ed



● No anti-flash for the Royal Horse Artillery as they carry out a Gun Salute

Picture: Soldier Magazine

Smoke and fury

I WAS amused by Lt Cdr Nicholls' letter 'The Right Precautions' (March) about gun salutes.

If this policy is followed by the Army, will we expect to see the Royal Horse Artillery arriving for the Queen's Birthday Parade salute dressed in anti-flash gear? And what about the horses?

The reference to the Queen's Birthday salute reminds me of June 2 1964. HMS Lynx tied up against the wall in Simonstown Harbour with HMS Jaguar tied up outboard of us.

We had two saluting guns rigged on our port side to fire over the jetty with the standby gun rigged on the starboard side.

Jaguar had two guns rigged to fire over the harbour

with her spare gun set up on the port side.

Both spare guns were manned. Fortunately neither of us had a misfire so we never found out if the gunner on the misfiring ship would have ordered the spare gun to take up the saluting sequence.

I know that our Chief GI (Charlie Heffard) would have severely frowned on any one of our saluting guns crew who flinched at the gun making a noise.

He might have smiled whilst doing so to the standby guns crew who were on the receiving end in the case of a misfire.

I shared the salute with Her Majesty with my wife by the way, as at 1100 that day I received a signal saying that mother and newborn son were well.

— Roger Breakwell, East Cosham, Portsmouth



● British and American officers pictured with Igor Sikorsky, his designers and the flying instructor at the Sikorsky factory in 1943

Sikorsky's first flight

BACK in May 2007 you published a letter from Mr F Udeli asking if it was true that a helicopter landed on the deck of HMS Campania early in 1943.

I can assure him that it is not true. Early in March 1943, when I was a Leading Air Fitter in the Fleet Air Arm, I was posted with several others to Gourrock in Scotland where we boarded the liner Queen Elizabeth. We sailed to America, landed in Nova Scotia and took a train to Asbury Park on the east coast.

After a few days we travelled to Connecticut and met a Lt Cdr RNVR, a Lt Tyler RN and three RAF officers. So far no one had told us what we were in America for.

We were driven to the Sikorsky Aircraft factory on the outskirts of Bridgeport. Here at the factory we

were given details of the helicopter designed by Igor Sikorsky. In a nearby field we saw a display of its capabilities. It was a very crude machine but had all the necessary components to fly up, down, backwards and sideways.

For the remainder of our mission we were given instruction and assisted in the production of the first helicopters. The first two were destined for the US Army, the second two went to the US Navy and the next two were for the Fleet Air Arm.

After the two helicopters were handed over to the British officers and the two pilots, RAF Lt Gable and Lt Cdr Peat, had completed their flying instruction, we were embarked on a large merchant ship, HMS Dagerston, along with the two helicopters. The ship had a platform built on the stern large

enough for the helicopters to fly off and return.

We joined the convoy to return to England in October 1944. On arrival at Liverpool we had an unfortunate mishap with one of the helicopters, but that's another story. The helicopters finally flew to the General Aircraft factory in Feltham near London. After a short period at this factory I was drafted back to Lee-on-Solent.

I haven't given the exact dates of this assignment to America but the approximate dates are taken from my Certificate of Service. There must be Naval records of the correct dates to justify what I have written, but there were no helicopters in this country in early 1943 as stated in the *Navy News* letter.

— W Moore, Owlthorpe, Sheffield

Sad goodbye

I WOULD like to reply to Mr Benson's letter (*February*) regarding the disgust and anger he feels towards about the way his son was treated when he left the service.

Being discharged with a sheet of paper signed by an 'Able Rate Writer' is of little importance. Allowing himself to become annoyed by this shows he is not appreciating the point.

I would remind Mr Benson that his son has very valuable skills and training to take to a civilian employer, courtesy of the Navy, he has been paid a sizeable (tax-free) gratuity and now enjoys an (index-linked) pension for the rest of his life.

For my part, I realise the benefits that my time in service has brought me and feel very grateful for them.

I joined the RN at about the same time as his son with £3 to my name. My one remaining parent died before I completed branch training and I joined the Fleet technically an orphan.

My rise through the ranks was more glacial than meteoric and I left after 23 years' service as a Leading Hand.

However, upon termination of service, I was able to use my gratuity to pay off a mortgage on a sizeable family home. Personally, I do not think that is a bad trade-off for 23 working years of my life.

So I urge Mr Benson to adopt the "my glass is half-full not half-empty" attitude and appreciate the benefits his son's time in service will have brought him.

Regarding the demob suit, if Mr Benson's son ever feels the need for a suit and trilby, I am quite sure he is perfectly able to go out and buy one under his own steam!

— Jim Hudson, West Rainton, Co Durham

...WHILST serving in Naples in 2001 I and approximately 150 other people were invited to attend the retirement ceremony of a US Navy senior chief who had completed 21 years' service.

The guest list included all senior NATO officers including

my boss, a Rear Admiral. The 6th Fleet band played, speeches were made, a Navy Chief recited a poem. Flags, certificates and plaques were presented, tears were shed (some very nearly by an RM officer). Afterwards I remarked to my boss that my retirement ceremony would be much different.

July 7 2002 was topped off by five minutes in an office where I exchanged my ID card for a computer-generated A4 certificate in a plastic ring-binder sleeve, two leaflets from the RNR and RNA and a piece of A4 with a UPO stamp to let me out of the main gate.

Thus I sympathise with Mr Benson, it certainly took the shine off my 22 years' service. Surely those who reach pensionable age of all ranks and rates are worth more than two bits of A4.

— Paul 'Taff' Thomas, former Leading Chef, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion

... I SYMPATHISE with D Benson. I left the Service in September 2005 as a Chief Petty Officer after 40 years and four months of service (man and boy).

My Valedictory Certificate was handed to me by a Leading Writer at HMS Nelson during my leaving routine. It was not framed and there was no mention that this could or should be presented to me at my last unit.

Unless there have been great strides in the last two-and-a-half years, the whole process of leaving the Royal Navy seems very basic and clinical when compared with the other Armed Services.

Having spoken with former members of the Royal Marines, Army and RAF, I conclude that their process for dealing with retirees seems to be far superior, with presentations from senior or commanding officers as the norm.

Come on the RN, let's make people who are leaving after lengthy periods of service feel appreciated.

— Gordon Trenell, (former CCY and CPO Careers Advisor), Blackpool



● The senior members of HMS Scott's wardroom — back row, left to right, Mr Kohler, Lt Cdr Jenks, the Rev Lamb, Cdr Swain, Lt Bullock, front row, Lt Jones, Lt Cdr Buck and Lt Mitchell

Golden oldies

THE 14 officers of HMS Scott wonder if they presently comprise the oldest wardroom afloat under the White Ensign, with an average age of 37 years.

They have no 'Young Officers' and no officer below the rank of

lieutenant. The youngest Lt is 24, the next youngest is almost 30.

At the other end of the scale there are two wardroom members in their 50s.

Can any RN ship beat this?
— Lt Paul Mitchell, HMS Scott

opinion

WHEN the Armed Forces stopped wearing their uniforms in public in the 1970s, the serious threat came from the IRA. Now it seems that it comes from within our own country.

Men and women from RAF Wittering have been banned from wearing uniform in public for their own safety, after being abused on the streets of Peterborough.

How gratifying it would be to exercise the Freedom of the City and march with bayonets fixed through the very streets where they were intimidated. It would also give the majority in Peterborough a chance to turn out and show their support.

However, it would not help those who have to run the

The views expressed in Navy News do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence

gauntlet of this abuse every day.

Nor would it solve the deeper malaise of a lack of respect for our Armed Forces. It is not just the bullies in Peterborough who show it. The well-heeled neighbours of Headley Court who objected to a residential home for the relatives of seriously-injured Servicemen displayed it, as did the students of University College, London, who used the votes they take for granted to ban all military personnel from links with the university.

The campaign for an 'Armed Forces Day', to pay tribute to our Services is a welcome start. But who would have thought, 30 years ago, that we would ever need it?



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CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGS



● This watercolour, *Up Spirits*, was painted by Derek Norris, of King's Lynn, to celebrate the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information.

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph that you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permissions for us to

publish it.

Given the impressive volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible – our space is limited.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



On a string and a prayer

PERMIT me to continue the saga of the much-lamented demise of the Navy rum issue.

When I was a Telegraphist (S) at HMS Anderson in Ceylon in 1943-45, we had a novel way to make a glass for our tot, which, much to this ex-destroyer sailor's disgust, was made up of three parts water to one part of the real stuff.

We used a beer bottle, around which we wrapped a strong string or cord about halfway down. We saw-sawed the string back and forth until the glass got hot, then plunged the bottle into a bucket of cold water.

The glass snapped, and we had a glass for our daily 11 o'clock rum issue.

Since I was on the other side of the pond when some joker at the Admiralty decided to discontinue "Up Spirits," I never found out what was the rationale for this crime against a tradition that harks back to Nelson's days.

In my day, the only booze allowed on board, apart from our rum ration, went to the wardroom, for the use of officers only.

I never did figure out why officers could be trusted to imbibe the hard stuff and still carry out their duties on board, and we lower deck ratings could not.

— Kenneth A Tipper, Ocala, Florida

... MARY Holmes' letter (*January*) about her husband's misfortune with his tot tumbler brings back memories of my first tot (and that's all they are, just memories).

I was in Belfast when I went 'G'. At that 'tot time' there I was in the mess on my birthday, awaiting my first tot, when the Padre came visiting.

Everyone in the mess offered him a wet which he accepted, then it was my turn.

Grasping my tot in his hand the Padre wished me a "Happy Birthday" and saw it off in one amidst great merriment from the associated onlookers.

After he had atoned for his misdeed, and despite my being an atheist, he and I got on well together, sharing many quiet chuckles.

— Basil Hudson, Hanworth, Middlesex

... YOUR feature about HMS Sidon exploding (*December*) brought back memories.

We were doing sea training in HMS Porchester Castle, having completed training at HMS Ariel and one day six of us went over to HMS Maidstone to have a day out in a submarine.

Two of us went on HMS Untiring and two on HMS Sidon. The next day HMS Sidon sank! The two guys who went out in her counted their blessings they were not on board when that happened. I enjoyed my day out, my offside dropped his hat down the periscope well – which the Captain really liked.

I had my first drop of rum – when the rum came up we all hung around and as there was only one glass they filled it up and passed it round and when it got to me I said "I am UA." They said: "We are all in this boat together, so have a sip" and this went on till the fanny was empty and I was very happy.

— Robin H 'Slinger' Wood, Elizabeth South, South Australia

For the benefit of younger readers, 'UA' stood for under age, 'G' for grog, and 'T' for temperance, for which the non-partaking sailors got an allowance of 3d a day in lieu of the tot.

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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Nephew honours his brave uncle

THE nephew of a soldier who died in the withdrawal from Norway in 1940 is travelling to Scandinavia to pay tribute to his uncle.

Pte Andrew Lee was a 27-year-old bugler with the Hallamshire Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment which had been trying to hold back the Nazis in Norway.

Andrew was one of the 36-man rearguard, the last of 5,400 British and French troops to be evacuated from Namsos.

A further 6,600 had already been plucked to safety from Åndalsnes, south of Trondheim.

Early on May 3 Andrew and his 35 companions trudged aboard destroyer HMS Afridi, the last escort to leave central Norway, but soon after dawn Allied ships came under attack.

Dive bombers struck the French destroyer Bison, and Afridi stopped to haul 69 survivors from the sea, the surface of which was covered in burning oil.

Two hours later the British ship was hit by two bombs, killing 53 of the ship's company, 35 Frenchmen and 13 soldiers – including Andrew.

A memorial in Namsos, inscribed with the names of nine RN ships and three British regiments which suffered casualties, was unveiled by the British ambassador in 2000.

The Friends of Namsos War Memorial have taken part in ceremonies in Norway every year since 2000, including the Norwegian, French and Russian PoW memorials as well as the British version, and also joined Norwegians in their country's Constitution Day celebrations.

One of those making the trip across the North Sea this year will be George Lee, nephew of Andrew and himself a PO in the Fleet Air Arm during the war.

George, who will lay flowers on the memorial, said: "It was a very sad day when I learned of Andrew's death."

"But his family knew nothing about how he died until we heard recently about the memorial and I decided to come to Namsos with my son and his wife."

"I would like relatives of men in any of the Services who took part in the campaign in Norway to consider joining us in May."

For details of the annual visit contact the Friends of Namsos War Memorial at 72 Warwick Gardens, London W14 8PP, tel 0207 603 1396 or email aajg@btinternet.com

Gift Aid plea

RNA HQ feels that following the change from covenanting to Gift Aid, momentum on Gift Aid has been lost.

The number of Gift Aid forms, from a membership of 27,680 stands at a "modest" 3,500.

HQ reminds members that this is 'free money', which has helped to maintain the annual subscription at £10.

A blank Gift Aid form is included with the February Newsletter at Annex B, and once completed, a Gift Aid declaration lasts until it is rescinded.

CTCRM welcomes LST&LCA

A "MOST enjoyable" visit was undertaken by the Devon Regional Group of the LST and Landing Craft Association to the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) at Lympstone.

For most of the group it was their first glimpse of the establishment where those who aspire to wear the green beret undertake their gruelling training.

The three-hour visit started with a buffet lunch in the Sergeants' Mess, after which

there was a video presentation encompassing the many facets of the course undertaken by a Royal Marines Commando in training.

The visitors were then taken on a tour of the centre, including the CTCRM museum.

After a brief pause for light refreshments, the group dispersed for photographs and then headed for home.

Group chairman S/M Maurice Hillebrandt said: "Such was our pleasure at this event and the warm treatment we received from

all whom we met at CTCRM that it was felt that the occasion might be commemorated by presenting our group plaque for addition to many similar plaques embellishing the wall of the Sergeants' Mess.

"This was undertaken on February 26 when I and the Group Regional Representative, together with our wives, presented the plaque to the WO1 (RSM) in the presence of a couple of dozen or so sergeants assembled for the brief ceremony."

Blackpool gears up for Veterans Week

BLACKPOOL is gearing up to host a week of celebrations in honour of veterans.

Veterans Minister Derek Twigg announced at the end of January that the seaside town had beaten off stiff competition to win the event.

And now the local council, in partnership with the Fylde Ex-

Service Liaison Committee, has committed to "honour and unite all who served."

Building on the experience of the three previous events, Blackpool has unveiled an ambitious programme of events which will take place over nine days from Saturday June 21 to Sunday June 29.

While the veterans will take centre stage – whatever their age

– there will also be plenty to keep the rest of the public entertained.

The week will begin with military role demonstrations, exhibitions and recruitment opportunities – and it is hoped that one of the highlights will be a beach assault and landing by Royal Marines.

Throughout the week veterans will be invited to deliver talks and readings recounting their experiences, and a local cinema will be stage free screenings of films depicting life during World War 2.

The famous Pleasure Beach amusement park is planning – weather permitting – to hoist a huge banner on The Big One, Europe's tallest roller coaster, displaying the Veterans Helpline number.

The amusement park is also offering a two-for-one promotion for veterans during the week, helping to attract a younger audience.

Wednesday June 25 will see a veterans gala dinner, and there will also be air races, a golf day, cricket match and beach show all geared to veterans of all ages.

The town's Victorian North Pier will be the main focus for National Veterans Day itself – Friday June 27.

Golf buggies will help transport

veterans along the pier which will act as a centre for information, socialising and entertainment, while a stage and screen will be erected on the promenade close to the pier.

Announcing the decision in January to award the event to Blackpool, Derek Twigg said: "Veterans are of all ages with a variety of different backgrounds, and they all deserve our recognition."

"Not only have they honoured their commitment to defend our country's interests in service, they have also used their skills and experiences to enrich their local communities."

"With the establishment of an annual Veterans Day, each year June 27 is our chance to recognise the achievements of those veterans who live amongst us."

Southport will stage its own Veterans Day on Sunday June 29 in Princes Park, in conjunction with the Veterans Agency and the Veterans Fund.

The day will include contributions from Forces careers teams, cadets, bands, ex-Service associations and charities, with the RNA and Sea Cadets among them.

Organisers hope this will eventually become an annual event.



● Sport played a big part in the Naval career of World War 2 veteran Dave McGaw – but he has had to wait a long time for one of his greatest sporting achievements. The ex-PTI achieved his first hole-in-one at the age of 82 at the third hole of the Swinton Park course in Manchester. Dave joined the Navy in 1941 and served in HMS King George V until 1946, when he qualified as a clubswinger at Pitt Street in Portsmouth. He was also Senior Rating i/c Royal Tournament in 1961 and the Edinburgh Tattoo in 1962

Time travellers

SHIPMATES from the Wetherby branch enjoyed a trip to a Heritage Weekend in the Portsmouth area.

Their itinerary gave them the opportunity to visit all the attractions in the Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth, and to venture across the water to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.

They also visited the most recent addition to the sights of Portsmouth, the Spinnaker Tower.

Supported by an Awards for All grant from the Big Lottery Fund, shipmates were able to share the experience with colleagues from Harrogate and Leeds branches.

The grant helped to cover transportation, accommodation and entrance fees.

Wetherby branch chairman S/M Fred Wake said: "We are not getting any younger and some are not able to visit the venues independently."

"The group supported each

other as required, reflecting the comradeship that our organisation fosters."

"The grant also enabled us to pick up locally and provide transport directly to the venues."

"We are most grateful for the support received from Awards for All."

Warwick seeks U-boat victims

WARWICK branch has been asked to help trace survivors from a ship sunk by a U-boat in 1942 – and which features in a bizarre wartime coincidence.

It has recently been established that the SS Warwick Castle, a troop transport of just over 20,000 tons, was torpedoed on November 14 some 200 miles north-west of Cape Espichel, Portugal by U413.

By a strange coincidence, this is the same submarine which sank HMS Warwick on February 20 1944 off the north coast of Cornwall.

The enemy boat survived a further six months before succumbing to depth charges off Brighton.

The management of Warwick Castle plan to plant an oak tree in the grounds of the castle in memory of the ship, and have asked Warwick branch for help in tracking down survivors of the troop ship, whichever Service they were in at the time.

Replies should be sent to AJ Coles, 41 Coventry Road, Warwick, CV34 5HN.

Writers compile list of victims

AT THEIR 18th annual reunion dinner, held in the WO&SR mess in HMS Drake, members of the Westcountry Association of RN Writers had an unusual addition to their toast to 'Absent Friends'.

Following the list of members unable to attend came the mention of those writers lost at sea.

Former Chief Writer Graham Jewell, the association's archivist, made the toast, having compiled the names of writers listed on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, showing all from the Devonport Division lost with no known grave.

Further research revealed details of the ships involved plus Christian names, official numbers, ages and where the sinkings occurred.

All told there were 107 of the branch named, from 1st Writer Riddells, who went down with HMS Monmouth at the Battle of Coronel in the early days of World War 1 to the loss of PO Writer Munn and Writer Edwards when HMS Saumarez struck a mine in the Adriatic in October 1946.

The list for World War 1 also included seven of the writers' predecessors, clerks and assistant clerks, a rank that was rendered obsolete by the formation of the Writers Branch in 1867.

A dozen writers from the Royal Australian Navy and two from the South African Naval Force are also remembered on the memorial.

Losses were not only from HM ships.

Four of the writers remembered were taking passage in troopships and another four died when the infamous unmarked Japanese ship Lisbon Maru, transporting Allied prisoners of war to slave labour in Japan, was torpedoed by the American submarine Grouper.

It is hoped that the RN Writers Association, which claims to be the world's oldest military association, having been established in 1887, can arrange for similar lists to be compiled for the memorials in Portsmouth and Chatham, now that the title of writer is no longer extant, having been superseded by logistician (personnel).

Token of gratitude

D BOAT Association secretary Mike Smith visited the Rev Albert Braithwaite at his home in Southsea to present him with an inscribed crystal decanter with the D Boats crest to thank him for 25 years loyal service to the Association.

The following day Association treasurer Jo Smith went to St Ann's Church in Portsmouth Naval Base to meet the Rev Martin Poll, who has agreed to become the D Boats' new chaplain.

Jo had made a kneeler with the D Boats crest and Silver Jubilee on the side.

The kneeler was presented to the church during the Sunday morning service.

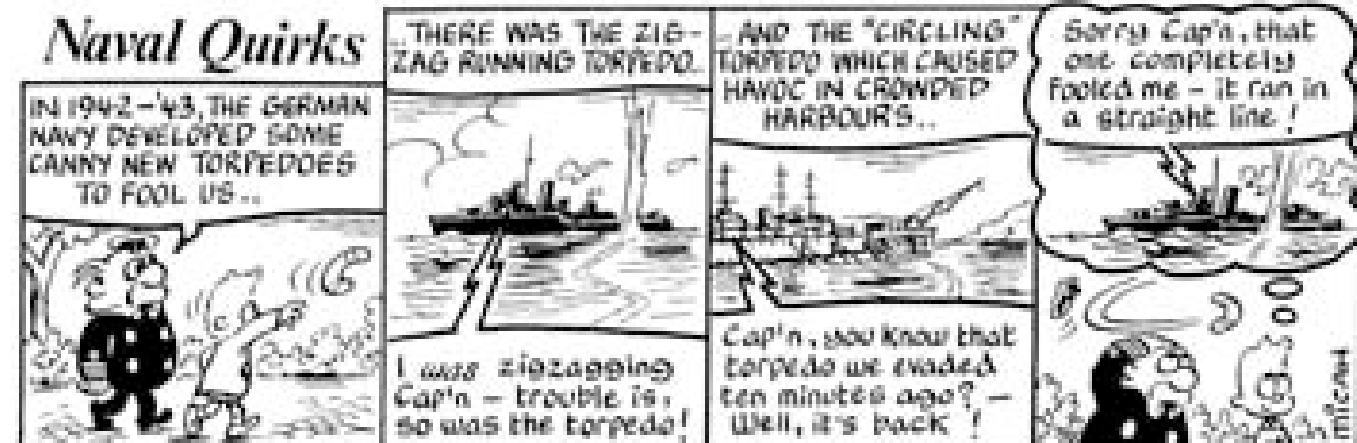
SAMA plaque for Millom

MILLOM and District branch in Cumbria was presented with a SAMA 82 plaque at their branch meeting in January as a result of a fund-raising effort.

The plaque was presented to vice chairman S/M Liz Watson as a mark of appreciation for the £1,200 which the branch raised for SAMA 82 and the Falklands Veterans Foundation.

The money was raised during a dinner to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the South Atlantic war, and the evening culminated in an auction that raised even more cash.

Millom and District is only two years old, but has already raised more than £2,000 for ex-Service charities, air and army cadet forces and other local charities.



Service recalls trench warfare

THE ANNUAL Collingwood Memorial Service will take place on Friday June 6 at the memorial in Blandford Camp, Dorset.

The trustees of the Collingwood Battalion Royal Naval Division Memorial and the president and members of the Blandford and District branch have once again invited those who wish to pay their respects to the gallant men of the Anson, Benbow, Collingwood, Drake, Howe, Hood, Nelson, Hawke Battalions and the Royal Marine Battalions of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham and Deal who gave their lives in the service of their country.

The memorial, of polished marble, was originally unveiled to the memory of the captain, officers and men of the Collingwood Battalion who died at Gallipoli on June 4 1915.

Those who wish to attend should first notify Roy Adam at Camvere House, 3 Portman Road, Pimperne, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8UJ, tel 01258 453797, with details of car registration number.

Attendees will gather from midday onwards at the Anvil Hotel, Pimperne (on the A354) for introductions and lunch, and tea will be laid on afterwards at the HQ Mess Royal Signals, courtesy of the chairman of the North Dorset District Council and the Commander Blandford Garrison, Brig Ted Flint.

New chairman

BUXTON and High Peak branch have elected S/M Mike Evans as chairman in succession to S/M David Parker.

A new committee was also voted in to serve for the next 12 months.

The branch meets at the Working Men's Club in Lightwood Road, Buxton, on the first Thursday of every month at 8pm, and new members are always welcome.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (right) was HMS Sabre, and the base was Gibraltar – as identified by Mr William Smith of Oxford, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's vessel was a versatile RNAS ship which first appeared in the early 1960s.

Can you name her, and name her sister ship which was launched at the same yard within three months of her? We have removed her name from the picture

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Bridgend branch is forced to shut

BRIDGEND branch has been forced to close through lack of membership.

Former branch president S/M Thomas Naish announced the decision, noting with regret that the young sailor of today did not wish to support or join the association in the town.

"We had no choice but to end over 28 years service due to many of our members now being disabled or housebound," said S/M Naish.

The branch was formed in

October 1980, and the standard was dedicated in April 1983 at St Mary's Nolton church in Bridgend.

"It was only fitting that we should return our standard back to the same church for safekeeping," said S/M Naish.

"On Sunday February 17 an excellent ceremony took place with members from Lydney and Cheltenham, also local ex-Servicemen – Welsh Guards – and the WRNS standard-bearer was also present.

"The Revd Komor and others officiated and, as a life member

and ex-president of the church, I was able to thank, during my speech, all loyal members for their long service.

"During our time we made numerous friends and visited

other branches throughout the country.

"We also dedicated a lot of time and money to local charities for medical advancement – too many to mention by name."



Billy Swift in front of his World War 2 Dodge command car in Normandy

Tribute to S/M Gordon

DURSLEY and District branch paraded their standard alongside that of No 7 Area to honour the passing of S/M William Gordon Taylor Harper.

Gordon was one of the stalwarts of the branch, which he joined in 1981, the year of its foundation.

Members formed an honour guard at St Bartholomew's Church in Lower Cam for the entry and exit of S/M Gordon's cortege in memory of "a wonderful shipmate who was always ready to serve the branch and always had a friendly word and smile for his shipmates."

D-Day memorial campaigner dies

WORLD War 2 veteran and memorial campaigner Billy Swift has died at the age of 85.

William Henry Swift, born in Hull in 1922, volunteered for the Royal Navy at the age of 18 in 1940.

As an HO (Hostilities Only) sailor, Billy managed to see action in many of the war's hot (and cold) spots.

He was on board the light cruiser HMS Cairo when it was sunk by the Italian submarine Axum during Operation Pedestal, the heroic and ultimately successful attempt to get food and supplies through to Malta in the summer of 1942. Billy was made an honorary citizen of Valletta in 2002.

He was on board the destroyer HMS Tuscan when she was badly damaged by a mine in the Bristol Channel in May 1943, after which he served in HMS Scourge (Russian convoys and D-Day) and HMS Bigbury Bay (Far East).

After the war Billy was instrumental in organising a number of reunions, including the 23rd Destroyer Flotilla.

As a result of this Billy and others began raising funds for a memorial to the men of the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy and Allied Navies who died during the invasion of Normandy. That memorial now stands at Hermanville.



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- Enjoy social activities
- Re-unite shipmates
- Remember the fallen
- Help the disabled
- Look after the needy
- Cheer up the distressed
- Stand together in unity

How to join

Write to RNA HQ

82 Chelsea Manor Street

London SW3 5QJ

Tel: 020 7352 6764

Fax: 020 7352 7385

www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



'You may need us one day...'

A SHIPMATE from Kent is hoping to encourage serving sailors to support the Association.

S/M Mick Withington, of the Isle of Sheppey, said: "I wish many matelots would rid themselves of the concept that we are a bunch of bemedalled old chaps – I could put it in a matelot's colloquial terms but I do not think the editor would allow it.

"Well, yes, that is quite true, but we are not without a sense of humour and enjoy getting out and about together – the camaraderie that binds us together is our love of the Service.

"We all realise that the comparatively young man coming out of the Service today has nothing in common with us, bearing in mind the age difference and a young man's family commitments, but one day those will be a thing of the past.

"Although still attached to family you'll find you have time on your hands.

"Some sadly will be a widow

or widower, some will suffer from just plain loneliness, others will have to bear many aches and pains brought on by age.

"Oh yes – it happen to the fittest of us; it gradually creeps up on us.

"This is where you enjoy the association, because you will gradually build a circle of shipmates around you from far and wide simply by putting yourself out and joining in some of all that goes on and the discussions that take place.

"Do remember, oppos who are now in the Service, that you will be 'ex' one day.

"When you feel you are ready, join your nearest branch – come along.

"Because we are living longer many things beset us – you may well need us as just a friendly face to call and chat.

"You just don't know how good that can make you feel.

"Or think about being able to go to a reunion and lose yourself amongst your own."

S/M Withington cites the example of the biennial gathering/reunion of ex-matelots – no particular branch or ship – and their families and friends.

The Association takes over a holiday camp on Hayling Island from Friday afternoon until Monday morning, with entertainment laid on for all three days including an informal church service (no chaplain) with a parade of standards only in the auditorium where the entertainment takes place.

"Then, of course, there is 'Tot time', a Sods Opera, and lunch is served when we have finished," said S/M Withington.

"Then there is 'make and mend', with entertainment in the evening, finishing with great singalong, with everyone on the floor. All this for £90 – it can't be bad.

"At no time in all the years I have been going have I see anyone over the top with booze, although everyone thoroughly enjoys themselves, making great friends and looking forward to the next time."

Summing up, S/M Withington said: "There may come a time when you may well need us as a friendly face; a visit hospital or something just to stave off loneliness – there are many many reasons.

"I don't like being the prophet of doom but it could happen.

"The association will always be there for you – for £10 a year it can't be bad, can it?"

Helping heroes

ON READING about the 'Help for Heroes' charity in the January RNA circular, the Frinton and Walton branch have agreed to donate £250 to the cause, and stated that members were pleased that the National Council have adopted the charity for 2008.

MYSTERY PICTURE 158

Name

Address

My answers

What's in a name?

THE plans for the warrant officers', senior rates' and senior non-commissioned officers' mess at HMS Excellent have now been given the green light after many designs and various locations. The new mess will be built behind the existing wardroom and will consist of three buildings, the main mess with public rooms, and two single-living accommodation blocks. WO2 Dai Bainbridge RM wrote to *Navy News* calling on our readers to help in the naming of the three blocks. He said: "The current mess is called the Edgar Evans building, named after PO Edgar Evans who was a member of Scott's Antarctic expedition. "As the mess has a number of fine artefacts, the current committee can see no reason to change the name of the new mess. "At present the naming convention for new accommodation blocks is to use personnel who have been awarded the Victoria Cross. "To that end it is intended to name the SLA after CPO Israel Harding and Sgt Norman Finch RM." He added: "The names for the new blocks are not set in concrete – but soon will be."

The Royal Marine requests that any reader who wishes to propose an alternative should write to him detailing their nomination and outlining the justification. Candidates will be presented to the mess committee for the decision-making process. Send your suggestions to: WO2 Dai Bainbridge RM, WOs, SRs and SNCOs Mess, HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8ER before June 30.

Navy steals Army's thunder

EDINBURGH resonated with the sound of the famous One O'clock Gun, but the explosive interlude was marked by the Royal Navy for the first time (*or so we are told – Ed*) in the Gun's 147-year history. However on this occasion the gun was not the usual light gun but a one-and-a-half tonne field gun, fired by a team from HMS Caledonia, which was hauled a mile through the city's streets to announce the start of the Sport Relief mile to its many runners. Breaking with all manner of traditions, the 18-man Naval team, led by PO(PT) Karl Hille, are also the first to have fired the One O'clock Gun on a Sunday. HMS Caledonia's commanding officer, Cdr Peter Adams, said: "We are creating a little bit of history with the firing of a One

O'clock Gun on a Sunday – but then, in a sense, it is only right and fitting. "In 1861, Scotsman Robert Wauchope, a captain in the Royal Navy, invented the time ball which can still be seen today on top of Nelson's monument on Calton Hill. "It was designed to give sailors on the Firth of Forth a reliable time signal. "But because they couldn't always rely on the weather allowing them to see the ball, a cannon was fired at the same time – and a tradition that is now known around the world was born." Runners could chose to run one, three or six miles for Sport Relief, one of 23 similar events taking place across the UK to raise money for the charity.

Birthday bash aboard Belfast

VETERANS and celebrants mingled on board HMS Belfast when the Town-class cruiser, now a floating Naval museum in the heart of London, marked its 70th birthday. An appeal for anyone who shared the same launch date of March 17 1938 drew responses from more than 20 imminent septuagenarians. "HMS Belfast has had a fascinating history since its launch in 1938," said Belfast's director Brad King, "but so have the people who have lived through the past seven decades. "They have seen a world war, the birth of rock'n'roll, England win the world cup and man walk on the moon. "March 17 was a great opportunity for them to get together on a ship that was 'born' on the same day as them." Veterans of the warship's long and interesting history – from Arctic convoys to D-Day, Korean War and Cold War – also gathered on board for the ship's anniversary celebrations. Now a branch of the Imperial War Museum, HMS Belfast has been preserved to record her long decades of Naval service.

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THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the April headlines of past decades...



The first EH101 civil prototype flew alongside the first Westland-built prototype from Westland Helicopter's Yeovil site on September 30 1988

40 years ago

THE hunt was on for 'The Hunt'. Described as the RN equivalent of the Yeti, this legendary tattoo depicted a Hunt scene down the back, with horses and hounds in full cry and a fox just about to go to ground. However, although many had claimed to see the phenomenon – even discussed in Parliament – but evidence of the infamous tattoo had yet to be tracked down. Capt Ronnie Scutt, the RN's tattoo expert, put an appeal in the paper to seek this elusive individual.

30 years ago

IN an unfortunate echo of current times, *Navy News* proudly announced "Woolly pullies can go ashore". A relaxation of the uniform rules allowed officers and senior ratings to wear their 'woolly pullies' and formal uniform styles ashore. Junior rates, for whom the woolly pully was part of their working rig, were not affected by the changes. The relaxation of rules was intended to lessen the inconveniences encountered by Naval folk in their daily lives.

20 years ago

THE name for the Navy's future helicopter was announced with great fanfare – the EH101 was to be called Merlin. However it was not until March 1996 that the first production Merlin – the first of 44 ordered by the Royal Navy – rolled off the production line at GKN Westland in Yeovil. And not until December 1998 that the Merlin HM1 was officially welcomed into the Fleet Air Arm when 700M Naval Air Squadron commissioned at RNAS Culdrose.



NOTICEBOARD

Reunions

HMS Ganges 1959-60, Grenville 19 Mess, 301 Class: Seeking all members for 50 year reunion. Please contact B G Barnham, 48 Colchester Road, Bures, Suffolk, CO8 5AE or tel: 01787 228417.

MAY 2008

HMS Illustrious Association: AGM/ reunion at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, May 2-4. Contact Alf Garton on 01395 266577.

HMS Victorious 1941-45 Association: Reunion service at St Bartholomew Church, Yeovilton on May 11 at 1030 followed by Lunch. Contact Frank Short on 01981 540585.

HMS Whitesand Bay Association: Shipmates from all commissions are welcome to our next reunion (20th) which will be held at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth on May 13. For more details contact Geoff Nightingale, 268 Galley Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 3LD or tel: 01442 263405.

HMS Ambuscade Association: Mini reunion to be held at Portsmouth on May 17. The event is open to all ex-Ambuscade's from all commissions. For details contact Mark Brocklehurst at mark@sharplesgroup.com or tel: 01925 839592 (working hours) or visit the website at <http://www.ambuscade.org>

JUNE 2008

HMS Bigbury Bay Association: There will be a special church service for all those who have served onboard HMS Bigbury Bay at the church of St Lawrence, Bigbury, Devon, at 1100 June 1. The ship's bell, which is housed in the church, will be rung by the ex chairman of the Bigbury Bay Association, Roy Ashton, at the start of the service. Drinks in the Royal Oak, Bigbury after the service. Contact the secretary David Ditcher at 17 Alison Crescent, Whitfield, Kent, CT16 3LN or tel: 01304 827109.

Indefatigable Old Boys: Annual reunion and dinner will take place at the Carreg Bran Hotel, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey (01248 714224) next to the old school on June 7. For more details contact Howard Trillo by email at howardtrillo@yahoo.co.uk or Tom Keyes at tom.keyes@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 07912 693655.

RN, RM, Wrens & QARRNS: The 2008 West Australia reunion of these ex-service personnel will be held at the Rockingham Navy Club, Point Peron Road, Rockingham, Western Australia on June 7 from 1130 to 1600 hours. Enjoy 'Up Spirits', lunch and afternoon tea all inclusive for AUS\$25 per person. Cash bar and tea or coffee available all day. Spouses, partners and friends welcome. Meet an oppo and indulge in some lamp swinging with old shipmates. Contact Peter Barsch at pkbarsch@bigpond.net.au or write to 43 Baskerville Crescent, Baldivis, Western Australia, 6171, Australia.

HMS Concord Association: 14th annual reunion at the Bay View Court Hotel, Bournemouth, June 13-15. Details from Peter Lee-Hale at Pleehale@aol.com or tel: 01249 811405.

HMS Manchester Association: The seventh reunion of the Second HMS Manchester Association will take place in the WO SR & SNCOs Mess, HMS Nelson on June 21 at 1900. For details contact Steve Swaine on 07855 628255 or Ian Tidbury at iantids@ntlworld.com or visit our website for more details: www.2ndhmsmanchesterasso.org.uk or tel: 07710 282633.

HMS Kale 1942-46: The 11th reunion will take place on June 24-26 at Southdene Hotel, Bridlington. Old and new hands welcome. Enquiries to RS Clay, 31 Cuckmere Way, Brighton, BN1 8GA or tel: 01273 552076.

JULY 2008

HMS Lincoln: 1968-69 commission 6th reunion at Burford in the Cotswolds, July 19-20. Any member of the ship's company of this commission is welcome to join us. For further details contact Mike 'Yorky' Sutcliffe on hmslincoln@yahoo.co.uk or phone 01282 618751.

SEPTEMBER 2008

HMS Orion Association: Reunion September 5-6 at the Royal Fleet Club, Devonport. For details contact Kay West, secretary, at kay.west@tiscali.co.uk, tel, 0116 259 2171 or write to 28 Stretton Road, Great Glen, Leicester, LE8 9GN.

846 Squadron (1962-64): The first 'Junglies' commission of the squadron – 45th anniversary reunion, September 6 at BW-Tiverton Hotel, Tiverton, Devon. Closing date for bookings August 1. Contact Barry 'Baz' Marshall at bjmarshall@littlebridge.eclipse.co.uk or tel: 01288 381002.

HMS Figsard, Series 34, September 1958: Calling all ex-Artificer Apprentices of Series 34. A reunion to celebrate 50 years since joining HMS Figsard will take place at the Quality Hotel in Plymouth on September 12-13. It is also being combined with the annual "Green and White" dinner/dance of the Figsard Association at the New Continental Hotel, Plymouth. Full details from ex-ERA 'Bodger' Bowden at bodger@virgin.net or tel: 01271 329095 or from ex-REA Richard Owen at rao13@hotmail.co.uk. Details also on the website at <http://www.series34.info>

17th Destroyer Flotilla Association: Reunion at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth on September 17. Contact Mary Smith, 5 Ockment Court, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1SR or tel: 01837 54758.

HMS Amethyst: Reunion in Coventry on September 19-21. Contact Eric Mustoe at eric.mustoe@btinternet.com or tel: 0121 3784618.

HMS Repulse Reunion Association: Celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first commission at the Lisdoonie Hotel, Barrow in Furness on September 26-27. Open to all 'Repulsives'. For more information contact Frank Scutt at fescutt@hotmail.com or tel: 01480 393228.

HMS Crane U23/F123 (1943-62) Association: Reunion and AGM at the Nottingham Gateway Hotel on September 26-28. All enquiries to Joe Smith at crane.bird@tiscali.co.uk or Tony Nuttall on 0115 952 6363.

HMS Ocean: 21st reunion and dinner at the Savoy Hotel, Bournemouth, on September 26-28. For more details contact W Entwistle on 01282 433910.

OCTOBER 2008

Nore Command RNPTIs Association: Annual luncheon will be held in the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent on October 5, 1200 for 1300. Open to all. Contact Orlando Jemmett on 01227 263691.

HMS Daring 1952-54 Association: Reunion to be held at the Holme Lacy Hotel, Hereford, October 10-13. Details from Owen Simpson at owen553@btinternet.com or tel: 01453 860564.

HMS St Vincent Association: The 12th AGM will take place on October 11 at St Vincent College, Gosport, starting at 1100, followed by lunch. Members will be able to visit the museum. The reunion dinner will be held on the same day at Thorngate Halls, Gosport starting at 1830. For more details contact Mrs Diane Smith on 023 9258 4498. For membership enquiries contact Geoff Rose on 01329 668596 or see the website at <http://www.hmsstvincentsassoc.org>

HMS Ulster 1958-60 Commission: The 50th and final reunion will take place on October 24-27 at the Kistor hotel in Torquay, Devon. Details of cost and the weekend package can be obtained from Reg Ralph at reginald.ralph@btinternet.com tel: 01323 725978 or write to 20 Penhale Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 7JX or Norrie Millen at norriem88@hotmail.com or tel 07779 909691. Details also on website at www.candoo.com/ulsternorrie/ulster/ulster12.html

HMS Bruce Association: The AGM/ reunion will be taking place on October 27-30 at the Ambassador Hotel, Scarborough. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary D T Heath on 0121 532 4058.

NOVEMBER 2009

847 NAS HMS Simbang 1969-71: A reunion is being planned for 847 NAS HMS Simbang, Singapore, 1969-71. The reunion is open to all who served in on this squadron for these dates. The reunion will take place on November 20-22, 2009 at the Royal Court Hotel, Keresley, Coventry. More information from Cliff Jones on 01772 768104 or 01772 855846.

JANUARY 2010

HMS Figsard 1964/HMS Caledonia S50 Artificer Apprentices: Kendal, Cumbria from January 15-17, 2010. Contact Clive 'Hoss' Horsley, 18 Almond Walk, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA13 0RJ or tel: 01229 825212.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed. Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

NOTICEBOARD

Deaths

POA(Phot) Mark Hipkin. DGMC London. Joined Photographic Branch from a stoker, and passed through RAF Cosford in 1992. Units included HMS Heron, HMS Gannet, Faslane Naval Base, CTCRM Lymington and many more, including drafts with the Standing Naval Force Atlantic and as Fleet Sea Photographer in Portsmouth – and a period with DPR(N) in London where he covered both hostile and peaceful assignments, including the evacuation of British nationals from Lebanon and the fighting between Israeli and Hezbollah forces which won him the Cameraman of the Year award at the 2007 RN Peregrine Trophy Competition. Photographic officer Lt Cdr Stuart Antrobus said: "Mark was a real giant of a man. When he came into the room it really did light up and his personality was like a rainbow. He was certainly larger than life and he will definitely always be a legend. He possessed all of the qualities that many would love to have had, and whether it was offering advice to the less experienced photographers, teaching raw recruits or helping old dinosaurs like myself, he was always there to help." February 6.

Cpl Damian 'Dee' Mulvihill. 40 Commando Royal Marines. Killed in action in Afghanistan while engaged in operations near Sangin. Joined the Royal Marines in 1998, before becoming part of 42 Cdo RM on Op Palliser and Op Silkman in Sierra Leone and Op Banner in Northern Ireland. After serving with the UK Landing Force Command Support Group at Stonehouse Barracks, he joined Alpha Company, 40 Cdo, in April 2006. Lt Col Stuart Birrell RM, CO of 40 Cdo, said: "He was a larger-than-life individual, with a personality to match, and his fellow marines took great comfort from his mere presence. As a friend he was loyal and trusted, as a comrade he was admired and emulated; a man of considerable ability, he will be sadly missed." Aged 32. February 20.

Robert 'Bob' Dack. AB. Served in Defender, Superb Field Guns crew 57. HMS Ganges and D-Boats Association. January 17. Aged 73.

Reg Knappman. Ch/Stoker. Served 1933-58. Served in WW2 on Russian convoy duties, ships included Courageous, Indefatigable, Racehorse, Apollo, Roebuck and Daring. HMS Daring (1952-54) Association. January 27. Aged 89.

Paul Wilson. WEM(R)1. Served 1990-2002 at Raleigh, Collingwood, Drake and in Defiance, Battleaxe, Norfolk and Richmond. February 15. Aged 35.

Albert 'Dave' Matthews. CMT(N). Served 1951-78 in RN Hospitals Plymouth and Chatham, ships Peregrine, Cossack, Cheviot, Neptune (Faslane), Drake, Manxman, Woodbridge Haven and Appleton. RN Medical Branch Ratings and Sick Berth Staff Association. February 6.

John Myers. CPO(OPS)(TS)(SM). Served 1964-89 at Raleigh, Dryad, St Vincent and Leander, Dolphin, submarines Resolution and Renown. January 11. Aged 61.

Ian Christie Stewart. Served during World War 2 in Dolphin, Hazard and Ganges. February 1

Dave 'Ollie' Oldridge RM. Served 1960-70 at Lymington, Far East Station (1963-69), Centaur and RM Deal. February 1. Aged 66.

William A Dean. AM(O)1. Served 1943-46 at Royal Arthur, Gosling, Daedalus, Jackdaw (833 NAS), Shrike (836 NAS) and Gannet (893 NAS) servicing Barracuda and Swordfish aircraft. January 9

Mick 'Kiwi' Moore. PO Naval Air Mechanic FAA. Served in Victorious (64-66), Hermes (67-69) and Ark Royal (70-72), Perth, Western Australia. February 22. Aged 61.

J Goodall. Served in first commission of Morecambe Bay in Far East and Korea. HMS Morecambe Bay Association. January

Michael 'Paddy' Meenan. CPO FAA. Served 1964-83 in Ark Royal and Hermes, 702 NAS Heron. February 29. Aged 62.

Harold Atherton. Seaman. Served WW2 and in Teviot 1943. Awarded Military Medal. River-Class Frigate Association. January 3. Aged 84.

Alan 'Taffy' Griffiths. Seaman. Served in Plym from 1941 throughout the war. River-Class Frigate Association. February 11. Aged 86.

Bernard 'Bernie' Ebert. CPO EA latterly OEA. Served Collingwood, Fearless, Bulwark, Onyx, Revenge, Hecate and Minerva during the Falklands conflict. Joined civil service, 2002-08. March 11. Aged 60.

Maurice 'Mo' Blythe. Leading Seaman. Served in Cockade, Ulster, Comet, Hornet, MTBs and MGBs. HMS Bruce Association.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS
Capt A R E Bishop. Served: Aréthusa, Onslow, Prevost, Glasgow, Excellent, Gambia and President.

Sub Lt N S Kimberley RNVR. Served: Tintagel Castle.

Cdr J G Ross. Served: Cambridge, Zest, Cavendish, Eastbourne, Excellent, Tartar and Centurion.

Rear Adm A G Watson CB. Served: Seahawk, Watson, Eagle, Salisbury, Dryad, Rooke and Relentless.

Lt Cdr R S F Webber DSC. Served: Vaceasay, Rototiti and Chieftain.

Lt Cdr C P N Wells-Cole. Served: Rodney, Excellent, Milne, Daedalus, Jamaica, Orion and Superb.

Lt David R Orchard RNVR. Joined 1942 as a Midshipman and trained at Daedalus then RNAS St Merryn before being posted to Unicorn 1943-46 then released to Reserve. HMS Unicorn Association. February 28. Aged 84.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Douglas George Stevens. Acting Yeoman. Served 1938-45 in Sheffield, Iron Duke and HQ Sparrow's Nest (Patrol Service); passed out as Signaller and served in HMTs Blackburn Rovers, Saon and Cayton Wyke including evacuation at Dunkirk. Joined Brecon on her commissioning (1942-45) serving a short time on loan to the submarine Upnor; final ship the French destroyer La Cordelière 1945. Founder member Brecon Old Hands Association and life member of RNA; life president Hemel Hempstead branch. September 2007. Aged 88.

Gordon Friendship RM. Plymouth Division, served in Europe during WW2. Lichfield branch for over 20 years. January 6. Aged 82.

Ernie Manville. POMM. Served 1943-46 in Coastal Forces. Chairman South Harrow branch. January 23.

Frederick 'Freddie' Downer. Seaman. Served 1942-46 in Collingwood, Nigella and Birmingham. Ipswich branch. December 20.

Arthur B 'Lou' Costello. L/Seaman. Served 1936-52 in Ramillies, Sheffield, Esk-

mo, Curacao, Holderness, Triumph, Dieppe and Corunna. Thurock branch. January 31.

Frank Wade. AB Gunner. Served from 1942 in Saxifrage (Russian convoys) and Tumult (Mediterranean convoys). Newark branch. January 29. Aged 84.

Norman Pidcock. Served in many ships including Enterprise, Prinz Albert, LS Assault, Golden Hind, Newfoundland and Euryalus. HMS Newfoundland Association; Wigston and District RNA branch 24 years, branch chairman main committee and social secretary for several years. February 8.

Arthur Frederick Robinson. AB. Survivor of sinking of Delight, July 1940. Kings Lynn branch and D-Boats Association. Aged 87.

Robert D S Christie. Nuneaton branch. December. Aged 84.

Basil Williams. Nuneaton branch. February 20. Aged 84.

Ron Benton. Coastal Forces. Founder member when South Harrow Branch commissioned January 1976. February.

Ron Livy. Long-serving associate committee South Harrow branch. February. Aged 73.

Arthur 'Artie' Goodburn. WO. Joined Blake Division Figgard as an artificer apprentice 1944 and subsequently served in Vanguard, Euryalus, Childers, Amphion, Seraph, Trespasser, Aurochs, Ambush and Alliance retired 1975 as an instructor and president of the mess at Dolphin. Figgard Association, Submariners Association and founder member of Isle of Wight RNA. March 1. Aged 79.

Maurice 'Mo' Hart. Seaman. Served in King George V, Glasgow, Bellerophon and Wave. Horley branch RNA and the Royal British Legion. February 19.

Norman John 'Jack' Fisk. Seaman RNPS. Served Virginia, Wellard, Prospect, Durban, Londonderry, North Atlantic. Chairman RNPSA North London branch; RNA and Royal British Legion Gold Badge life member. February 25. Aged 84.

George Brewin. Telegraphist during WW2 serving in several shore bases and at sea in Inglis. President March branch. February 29. Aged 83.

Sgt Tom Brooker. 'A' Troop 45 Commando. Served 1943-45; at D-Day +2 Holland. Lydd and Dungeness branch. February 28. Aged 84.

Pete Downing. ME. Served 1951-63 in Indefatigable, Eagle, Maidstone, Centaur and submarines Finwhale and Tally-ho. West Bromwich branch. December 21. Aged 74.

James Cunningham. Former branch secretary and founder branch secretary of the RNA Club, Deeside.

Ernest Whitehouse. Deeside branch.

David William Stocker. CPO(ME) SCC. 20 years' service with TS Intrepid. Cheshunt branch. February 23. Aged 66.

Walter 'Wally' Alfred William Parker. Leading Seaman. Served 1943-46 in Magpie and Nelson. Pwllheli branch. January 11. Aged 82.

T H Pickett. Vice chairman Leicester branch. Normandy veterans. Aged 85.

George 'Vinny' Hughes. Associate member Harlow branch. Former merchant navy wartime survivor of armed merchantman attack (interned); also staunch supporter of the Royal British Legion. March 9.

Thomas Capewell. Harlow Branch. February.

George Catt. Harlow and also vice chairman Harlow NVA. March.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
E 'Eric' Dodd. Ch Mech. Served 1971-82 in submarines Resolution, Swiftsure and Superb. Medway Towns branch. Age 60.

D J 'Buckwheat' Harris. L/Std. Served 1947-61 in submarines Sirdar, Totem, Thorough, Telemachus, Tactician, Trespasser, Nesneschal, Seascope, Anchorite and Narwhal. Plymouth branch. Age 80.

F 'Fred' Cunliffe. AB HSD. Served 1951-55 in submarines Aurochs, Taciturn, Trump and Untiring. Merseyside branch. Age 76.

D 'Donald' McGibbon. AB. Served 1953-55 in submarines Ambush and Taciturn. Essex branch. Age 75.

THE FISGARD ASSOCIATION
T J 'John' Porter. 1950 Series 10. January 5.

E W 'Ernie' Cann. 1944 Anson. January 16.

Frank Harris. 1945 Hawke. February 5.

T A 'Pinkie' Parker. 1956 Series 26. February 14.

L J 'Les' Pritchard. 1944 Anson. February 21.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Bernard Wright. Sto/Mec. Served in Coquette. January 21. Aged 78.

Lt Richard Webber RNVR. Served in Lennox, Rattlesnake and Friendship. February 12. Aged 84.

Frank Hammond. AB. Served in Hound. February 19. Aged 82.

Arthur Latham. Sto/Mec. Served in Fancy. February 23. Aged 82.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk

Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk

Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veteransagency.mod.uk

Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600

RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 8672

Falklands 25: 0800 169 2277 (Veterans Agency), www.falklands25.com

Royal Naval Association: 020 7352 6764, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk

British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org

RN Community: www.rmcom.mod.uk

Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafo.org.uk

Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org

Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com

Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk

RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk

National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk

Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Operational Honours

Northern Ireland
QCVS: Cpl William David Hayes RM

Afghanistan
DSO: Capt Jaimie McCoy Norman RM
MC: Sgt Daniel Alan Fisher RM; Sgt Steven Edmond Veale RM

Mid: Mne Daniel Gad Curtis RM; Mne Kenten Luke Rademan RM; Cpl William Daniel Sewell RM; Sgt Stuart Frazer Rennie Wallace RM

Iraq
MBE: Lt (Acting Capt) Edward Varnier

Swap drafts

Logs(CS) Davidson. Draft: HMS Ark Royal. Would like to swap for: any Plymouth, Scotland, Portsmouth ship. Contact: 0783 767 1558.

POMA Darrin Alker. Draft: First Aid Training Unit, Faslane, effective start date May 13. Any reasonable offers south of Scotland considered, Portsmouth area preferred, or commutable distance from same. Contact: 93832 7078 or 7079, or by military email MWS-NBCD-PTUS1.

LS(AWW) Dahlgren. Draft: HMS Cumberland. Would like to swap for: HMS Bulwark or HMS Albion. Contact: military email 261-lsws1@a.dii.mod.uk.

PO(Sea) Read. Draft: MCTC Colchester. Will consider any draft. Contact: MCTC Colchester, Essex, CO2 9NU.

Log(Pers) Scoones. Draft: HMS Nelson, current. Would like to swap for: Yeovilton or Yeovilton NAS. Contact: 07989 817306.

AB(WJS1) Everett. Draft: HMS Chatham. Would like to swap for: any non-deploying ship asap. Contact: 07870 828298.

CPOET(WE) Marland. Draft: FOST (Devonport Sea) September into a CPOET(WE)/CWEM billet. Will consider any Portsmouth sea draft, deploying or not.

Ask Jack

Arctic Convoys – HNoMS Shika FY1664 (Armed Whaler). The children, Olwyn and Jim, of James Fox Grainger, are seeking information about their father's Naval service. James was known as Lofty or Scal and was born in Hartlepool in 1915. It is thought that he was on a few convoys, one of which was P09. If anyone can share any snippet of information or photographs, they would be so precious. Contact Olwyn Hart or Jim Grainger, 12 Egerton Road, Hartlepool, TS26 0BN.

HMS Ark Royal: I have in my possession a shield that was made maybe by someone who was a past member of the crew of the Ark Royal. It has the emblem of Ark Royal on the front with a message written in pencil on the back, the words are A/LEM Drury 3K3B Mess HMS Ark Royal c/o F M O Singapore. I bought it in an op shop in Australia, just wondering if it might bring back memories to a past crew member of the Ark Royal. Contact Ramon Brown at raymax@adam.com.au or write to 1 Camelia Drive, Parafield Gardens, 5107, South Australia.

D-Day: Trying to trace information about two men on a ship in June 1944 at the Normandy landings, a Scottish engineer Robbie Scott, and a Lt or Lt Cdr, called Christopher Marshall. We know the ship was torpedoed and sunk on June 8. The engineer died, believed drowned, the lieutenant survived until his mid forties but suffered from shrapnel wounds in his back and neck. Christopher was married with one child; he was decorated for his part in a night raid. We have a description of a round silver medal with star embossed and laurel or wreath round the edges; yellow and blue colours are connected to it. We have looked at the frigate Lawford, and Andora has been put forward, even Argent. It's possible that Christopher came from a small village called Haw in rural England. Contact John Brighton, 2 Westfield School, Tolpits Lane, Watford, Herts. WD1 86NP. tel: 01923 249915 or 07956 293345.

FAA Pilot: Some years ago a FAA pilot had to land his Harrier on a fishing boat off Spain/Portugal. Colin would like to know who he was and how much 'salvage money' did the fishermen get? Contact Colin Taylor, 53 Bernard House, Henry's Walk, Ilford. IG6 2NS.

HMS Faulkner: Hoping to reunite a few paintings with ancestors of the artists. My father served on HMS Faulkner during WW2 and upon his death, we found he had three paintings which had obviously been given to him during his time on board. I suspect the original artists have since passed on, but none the less, I would love to be able to pass them on to anyone with a family connection. There are two pictures drawn by a J R Channing, both from 1942, and one by a W S Kerr also from 1942. I would be happy to forward them to any proven relative. Contact Miss Sarah Lee at asurreysarah@btinternet.com or tel: 020 8397 1832.

Pusser's Pea Soup: Can someone from my distant past (or anyone else's for that matter) let me have the recipe for Pusser's Pea Soup. I really miss my fix, even more than my tot! Contact Alex Litchfield at alexlitchfield@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 812108.

HMS Jackal 1941: Jackal was asked to help defend Plymouth with her anti-aircraft guns against incoming German planes. Many of the ship's crew, who were from Plymouth, had to stand by and watch the city's destruction. After the action many of the crew wanted to go ashore and see how their families had fared, but the captain, Lord Mountbatten turned down the request and ordered them to sea. In protest the ratings slammed the doors and effectively went on strike. Later that day Mountbatten relented but when the ship arrived in Gibraltar a few weeks later, the ringleaders were flown home by the military. Whatever happened to them? Contact H Webb, 11 Northampton Lane South, Moulton, Northampton, NN3 7RJ.

Lt Cdr J H P Campbell: Seeking contact with any WW2 veterans or relatives of Lt Cdr (E) J H P Campbell DSO, Commander Aegean Raiding Operations – Southern Area (COMARO 1) from 1942-44, also CO of Port Dereman and Yedi Atala in the Gulf of Kos, Western Turkey, the advance base of the Levant Schooner Flotilla (LSF), British Special Forces (SAS, SBS) and the Greek Sacred Company (GSC) who were conducting

Argles RM; WO1 Darren James Paskins RN

QCVS: Capt Andrew Giles Goldsmith RMR; Lt Cdr Michael Anthony Goodall

National operations
QCB: Sgt Ian McDougall RM; Sgt Paul Andrew Norris RM

Non-combatant awards
OBE: Cdr Iain Galloway Breckenridge
QGM: POLogs(SC) Richard Holleworth
QCB: CPO(D) Robin Henry Thomas Rickard

Weapons section preferred. Contact: 93825 2311 or military email mws-itt-exp22.

AB(Logs)(CS)(D)1 seeks swap draft from deployed (until Jul 08) Portsmouth-based Hunt-class MCMV to any Portsmouth-based FF/DD or above. Contact: Lt Piper, 07717 816580 or email 300-OPS@a.dii.mod.uk.

AB1(Sea) Cole. Currently on HMS Portland, looking for a swap to any Portsmouth-based ship. Contact: 07759 267500 or military email HMS PORTLAND-ABSEA10.

AB Piper. Specialist: Chef. Draft: HMS Quorn. Will swap for: any Type 23. Contact: 07789 554171.

Assignments

Lt Col N W Bruce-Jones to Commando Training Centre Royal Marines as CO on June 16.

Lt S H Latus to HMS Ranger as CO on March 17.

Lt A O Riddett to HMS Raider as CO on March 11.

Where are you now?

Benbow 20s Division: Does anybody have a photograph of Benbow 20's Division taken in 1980? Mark is getting a bit nostalgic and his lad wants to join up now so he is trying to convince him that he was young once, too. Any information gratefully received. If you were in Benbow 20 in 1980, please get in touch. Contact Mark Scaife at scaifee@yahoo.com or tel: 07974 393121.

HMS Blake: During my service I served on Blake (1st commission), then Andrew, Aeneas, Anchorite, Oberon and Otter. I had the great delight to serve with a lad by the name of William Benjamin Oliver Daish (Mick) on three of the boats mentioned. I met met him on or about 1980 in Portsmouth, despite my efforts I have not been able to contact him. If former contacts know of his whereabouts could they please contact me at Ronnie McAlpine, 19 Eden Drive, Gardenhall, East Kilbride, Glasgow. G57 8XZ.

HMS Blake, HMS Arun: Tex Avery is looking for anyone who served with him. Those in L/2/L. Mess, HMS Blake 1975-78 and LS Andy 'Sharky' Ward and Mick Flanagan of HMS Arun or anyone else. Contact Tex on 07770 720905.

HMS Centaur: Seeking anyone who knew the late Frank Northcott who last served in HMS Centaur 811 Squadron in 1956. He also served in RNAS Anthon 1952, Culdrose 1954 and Eglinton 1956. Contact Mrs M Northcott on 01869 244462.

Frank De Mengel: Looking for Frank who was a Killick Chef the last time we met, which was a long time ago. If anyone knows the whereabouts of Frank could the contact Roger Moore at patrog41@hotmail.com or tel: 01209 218348.

HMS Ganges and more: Chris Webb ex-CRS, would like to hear from anyone that knew him on the following ships (59-84), Ganges, Mercury, Victorious, Comcen Whitehall, Lion, Warrior, Comcen Hong Kong, Tilford, Kranji W/T, Endurance, Moscow camp Northern Ireland, Manchester RNR. He now lives in the Philippines and would like some ex navy contacts. Contact Chris Webb at finky.69@hotmail.com or write to Sinandigan, Puerto Galera, Mindoro, Philippines.

HMS Hermes: Harry Childs is seeking former shipmates. Harry trained at Gosport as an artificer and his best mate was Ian 'Dutchy' Holland. First went on Hermes and then Warspite, Resolution, Conqueror and Vanguard through the 80s and 90. Contact Harry through Petra Pfeuffer on 01453 541356 or 07796 910749.

PO Ted 'Jack' Hobbs: Seeking anyone who knew 'Jack' Hobbs, served in HMS Forth, Narvik and Malta 1958. He ran for the ship and for Malta AAA. Also served in Safeguard, Rosyth, Dainty, Reclaim, Collingwood and Dolphin. His wife would like to do *This is your Life* for his 70th birthday in July. Contact Mrs E Hobbs, 28 Salmonby Road, Scunthorpe, DN17 2JJ.

HMS Ladybird: Would like to contact anyone who recalls HMS Ladybird (ex SS Wusueh) based in Sasebo, Japan 1950-53. Contact Peter Relf at cossackd@googlemail.com or write to 57 Havisham Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 4JUV.

SCU Leydene (HMS Mercury): Seeking the shipmates who attended the wedding of Mike Fleming and Jacky in 1983. Colin Avis, Frank and another are in a group photograph. They were all serving at SCU Leydene at the time. Mike and Jacky celebrate their silver wedding anniversary on May 10 and would like you there. Contact Mike Fleming at mike@mflaming.co.uk, write to 48 Northumberland Close, Warfield, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG42 3XD or tel: 01344 451487.

Mine Warfare Association: The association is open to all serving Mine Warfare qualified officers and senior rates, and to

any ex serving members of the branch who completed a MW career course, junior, senior rates and officers. For more information contact Steve Harvey CPO(MW), HMS Collingwood on 01329 333459 or Mob: 0797 7190442

HMS Monmouth: Looking for Kev Dufton, Lee Hayward, Paul Stewart off Monmouth 1993-95; Davey Jones from Raleigh 1987; Paul 'Rans' Ransley off London 1997-99 or anyone else who knows Frenchie Le Fustec. Could they please contact Andy Le Fustec at andylefustec@hotmail.com or tel: 01534 887053.

HMS Ocelot: Were you in the 1964-65 commission? Do you know where Ron Lucas is? A few of us have got in touch and have a couple of get-togethers a year. If you are interested get in touch. Contact Brian Defurey at bd40@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01274 778088.

HMS Plymouth, HMS Cochrane: Seeking Steven Blaydon WEMR and Tommy Walsh LVEM, last seen in 1983 on HMS Plymouth and William 'Billy' Veighy and Dickie Dawson LVEM(MSM) last seen in 1983 in Cochrane. Robert 'Bagsy' Bagwell celebrates his 25th wedding anniversary later this year and would like to catch up. Contact Robert at rob_bagwell46@hotmail.com or tel: 01482 797477 or 07765 838146.

SSME Course, Class 65, Urchin/Wizard 1964: Where are you now 'Daisy's Class'? I have a class photograph I can forward to former course members, who might help me to put names to faces. Can't remember them all after 44 years! Contact Grant Ness at grant.ness@orange.fr or write to Crolour, 79120, St Coutant, France.

HMS Alert 1961-63 Commission: Seeking members of this ships company, in particular 'Scribes' Drummond, who have not yet attended the annual reunions. I may have some good news for you. Contact 'Doc' Bob Howard at robert.howard403@ntlworld.com or tel: 023 9279 9141.

Sports lottery

February 16: £5,000 – CPO D Lucas, 771 NAS, RNAS Culdrose; £1,500 – Mne R J Worth, 40 Cdo RM; £500 – Mne R John



Reservists undergo revitalised training

A SENIOR administrator, a legal adviser and a toolmaker were among the first to undergo a revitalised new entry training course for Royal Navy Reservists held at HMS Raleigh.

In the first major review for more than 20 years, changes to the two-week course have focused on developing military team-working skills and re-aligning the course with the standards expected of their full-time counterparts.

A total of 16 new recruits to the RNR, aged between 18 and 40, took part in the first course.

They were mainly drawn from the Liverpool-based RNR unit HMS Eaglet, and HMS Flying Fox, located in Bristol.

Cdre Stephen Thorne, Commodore Maritime Reserves, was the inspecting officer at the recruits' passing-out parade.

Among the successful recruits was Ross Bevan (25), from Ormskirk.

A legal adviser at Bury Magistrates Court, Ross was awarded the Captain's Prize as the trainee who achieved the best results during the course.

Ross said: "The course was hard and exceptionally tiring, but overall thoroughly enjoyable."

Senior administrator Karen Johnson (34), from Bridgewater, joined the RNR last June.

She is married to a serving RN warrant officer and belongs to HMS Flying Fox.

Karen said: "I joined the RNR to serve my country and be part of a team."

"Highlights of the course were passing the fitness tests, camping and walking on Dartmoor, and the firearms training."

The new course includes weapons-handling training and an introduction to basic firefighting.

There is closer integration with the full-time RN trainees undergoing their initial training, with both sets of trainees joining together for ship visits, orienteering exercises and a weekend under cover on Dartmoor.

Cdr Ian Pethick, RNR Initial Training Officer, said: "We are extremely pleased with how well the new course went."

"All the recruits passed the course, with some achieving 100 per cent in the final exam, and they all met the required fitness standards."

"The trainees now have a better understanding of teamwork, a greater sense of militarisation and they are much more aware of their commitments to the Naval Service in a tri-Service environment."

The RNR is some 3,250-strong, spread between 13 RNR units across the UK.

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse (Fleet Media Ops), 93832 8809 or Lt Cdr Harvey Burwin (DPR(N)), 9621 85984.



● New accommodation under construction at Culdrose

Singular scheme enters second phase

THE MOD's scheme to improve Service accommodation is about to enter its second phase.

The Defence Secretary announced in 2001 a scheme to fund improvements across the Services.

The new or modernised accommodation comprises a single room with a 4ft bed, an en-suite shower room and ample storage facilities.

Communal snack preparation and utility rooms provide shared washing machines, tumble dryers and fridges.

Rising construction costs and the MOD's financial constraints have had an impact, but Project SLAM

(Single Living Accommodation Modernisation) is being shared among the RN establishments with the aim of reducing multi-occupancy rooms except for trainees.

To date 6,600 bedspaces have been built or refurbished across the RN estate, giving some 10,000 bedspaces at Grades 1 or 2 for condition out of a total requirement of over 22,000.

A further 2,300 are scheduled to be built by March 2013, and it is hoped that in addition a further upgrade of JR accommodation at HMS Raleigh will also be achievable by 2013.

A new drive from Project SLAM

will also look at ways of bringing some of the Grade 3 and 4 for condition up to Grades 1 or 2.

The aim was to try to spread delivery so that each site had some new build. However the challenges ahead will be trying to build new and modern accommodation with the constraints of historic sites such as Dartmouth and RM Stonehouse.

The new accommodation has been welcomed by users – one individual said: "I used to have rented accommodation outside for the weekends, now I have a home here on base, I have stopped renting."

OJAR marks start of JPA appraisals

THE launch of the JPA Officers Joint Appraisal Report (OJAR) on March 31 heralded the start of the appraisal implementation process across the Naval Service.

From that date, all RN and RM officers reports are now compiled and submitted on JPA.

The JPA Appraisal Team will continue to provide guidance and support during the roll-out, but with the focus quickly turning to the first reports for sub-lieutenants and captains RM, they think it is a good time to highlight the action that needs to be taken by all officers and where to find help.

■ Compiling JPA OJARS

Depending on where you are serving and your access to JPA, there are three ways to compile a JPA OJAR, with the help of your nominated Appraisal Administrator, of course:

■ JPA Online: This is the first-choice method and should be used ashore and at sea whenever practicable;

■ JPA Deployed Offline: Seagoing units and some deployed units can use this option wherever it is appropriate and feasible, but the recommendation is that the online application should be used until the offline version can be proved and regularly synchronised;

■ Non-Standard Appraisal Reports (NSAR): If the first two options fail, NSAR templates may be used as a last resort to complete the reporting process, following the instructions in JSP 757 Chapter 11.

■ OJAR cells

Fleet units will continue to follow current practice and send completed reports, using the Reporting Chain, to the same regional OJAR cell as now.

But the role of these three organisations will expand and change with the roll-out of JPA Appraisal.

Responsibility for the initiation of an OJAR will pass to Unit Appraisal Administrators, while each OJAR cell will undertake the checking and approving role

for all OJARs compiled within a dedicated geographical area.

■ Presentations and Workshops

It is important that you are ready for JPA OJAR implementation and know what is required of you.

Hopefully, you have your copy of the tri-Service JPA Appraisal Introduction Booklet and had the opportunity to attend one of the 100 or more presentations to date.

The presentations give you an overview of a process that is applicable to everyone.

If your unit has yet to receive a presentation, don't hesitate to

contact the RN/RM JPA Appraisal Team on PNB (9380) 27465 and arrange for the team to attend.

Unit Appraisal Administrators are key people in the process, and consequently workshops are being conducted to give more in-depth guidance and hands-on practice to those holding this responsibility.

Workshops can also be arranged by contacting the JPA Appraisal Team on the number above.

■ Self-Service Actions

It is vital that you take ownership of your Appraisal Report and ensure that your JPA Self-Service information is up-to-date.

It is this data that will auto populate the front page of your Appraisal Report – see RNTM 52/08 for further details – and to ensure this happens, make sure you complete these sections in 'Self-Service': Employee Preferences (location, job type, career aspirations) and Personal Objectives (agreed by your line manager).

Should you need help to update your personal information via Self-Service, visit the JPA Appraisal Support website <http://royalnavy.defence.mod.uk/persdivhb/jpa/index1.htm>



● An Iraqi serviceman, his face obscured for security reasons, learns to play rugby in Umm Qasr

More than a passing fad

THE Royal Navy has a long tradition of spreading the rugby word around the globe.

And RN Senior XV Technical Analyst CPO Ash Coates is making sure that proud tradition continues today by bringing the game to Iraqi sailors.

Ash said: "When I was deployed to Iraq the prospect of developing as a rugby coach appeared unrealistic."

"Fortunately, as part of the Naval Transition Team in Umm Qasr my Terms of Reference involved mentoring the development of the Iraqi Navy and Marines."

"This included developing physical training, and provided an opportunity to introduce rugby to the Iraqi sailors and Marines."

"The top sport in Iraq is football, followed by

volleyball and basketball, so the first objective was to sell rugby as a game to the Iraqis."

"Beginning at a very basic level, the first practices were interesting and a challenge to say the least!"

"As the Iraqis spread the word to shipmates, interest and turnout gradually increased week by week."

"This was helped by showing the Rugby World Cup games as well as RN games from last season."

"They became motivated and were enthusiastic about taking the sport further."

Aims in early sessions involved getting the players to understand the basics of rugby as well as having fun.

Initial problems included impressing upon them that the ball cannot be passed forwards and that players are not allowed to bounce it.

Training school is scorching success

THICK smoke billows through the cabin as Chris Kirkpatrick directs a hose at the roaring fire on a bunk bed.

It is hot, noisy, and there is water spraying everywhere.

But within moments the lights have flicked on, the fire has disappeared and the smoke is sucked from the cabin.

Chris takes a breather from learning how to tackle a fire in a 'hot' training unit at the RN/Flagship firefighting school in Portsmouth.

We focus on Chris for one reason – he is the 100,000th student to pass through the school, which embraces facilities at HMS Excellent on Whale Island, HMS Raleigh in Cornwall and at Glasgow.

And the firefighting training team is celebrating that milestone, which has been achieved in seven years.

Chris and his 99,999 colleagues, both military and civilian, have been taught to tackle fires with confidence on board a ship, training in one of eight facilities which tower three storeys high.

Their instructors are Royal Navy and Flagship staff who are all accredited by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Designed to replicate the inside of a ship, the hot training units teach students what to do if they discover a fire and how to safely tackle a fierce blaze.

Trainees have to carefully extinguish the controlled propane flames while working their way through artificial smoke and 'challenging' environments.

PO Kirkpatrick, who was taking the advanced firefighting course, said: "The training here is very realistic."

"No expense is spared to ensure we receive the best possible learning."

"At sea there aren't any firefighters so it's our job to be as prepared as possible."

"It's a really worthwhile course, which is important, as it puts you in good stead to go back to sea."

"I trained in the old-style units too, and since then they have considerably changed."

"There is more room, it's easier to manoeuvre in the suits and you feel very safe knowing you are in a controlled environment."

Flagship Fire Fighting Training Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Flagship, along with VT Critical Services, won the £150 million private finance initiative (PFI) contract in 1999 to design, build, operate and maintain the RN's firefighting training facilities.

Although primarily for training RN personnel, the organisation also brings in money for the Navy by training civilian maritime and commercial organisations, with crews in the superyacht sector being the latest initiative.

Com and join the RN website

THE RNCom community website was launched in June 2005, and with 5,000 members currently aboard it continues to grow in popularity.

RNCom was set up to support all Naval Service personnel and their families, including reservists.

It consists of two areas, an outward-facing website that can be accessed by everyone, and a members-only area.

The outward-facing site acts as an information resource, with lots of useful information about the RN. It also has an online help desk.

The members' area is an unclassified yet secure area where serving members, families and

friends can see ship and unit individual areas.

These mini websites are set up prior to a deployment with the help of dedicated RNCom community workers, who work with the ship to make sure that all of the families are informed about the site and provide a link between the ships and the families when deployed.

Eventually it is hoped that every ship or unit that deploys will have a presence on the site – there are currently 56 ships/units who have signed up to RNCom and who regularly send updates as newsletters, digital diaries or photos.

As well as information the members' area has a chat room and several discussion forums,

where families can meet up online and chat with other families of Service personnel.

Every member can access and use these discussion forums and the range of topics discussed is endless.

One of the main benefits to the Service person is that membership comes with its own RNCom Hotmail-type account that will run through the DII and has full security accreditation, which means RNCom can be accessed from desks when shore-based.

If you or your family have not yet signed up, next time you're on the web go to www.rncom.mod.uk

Defence Academy links with Institute

MILITARY personnel going through the UK Defence Academy can now gain nationally-recognised management qualifications through a new partnership with the Chartered Management Institute.

The alliance means that students on the Advanced Command Staff Course (ACSC) achieve recognition for management and leadership skills through qualifications accepted by civilian and military employers.

The affiliation will benefit up to 330 ACSC students annually. As part of the alliance, candidates on the ACSC will graduate with an Executive Diploma in Management, recognising their ability to manage performance as well as lead people and address challenges.

The partnership also gives many of the individuals the opportunity to secure the Institute's higher-level Executive Diploma in Strategic Management.

As a result of the collaboration, ACSC students will also have access to a wide range of resources designed to help develop their management and leadership skills.

Lt Col Dominic Evans, co-ordinator of ACSC, said: "The Joint Staff College strives to provide employees with development opportunities that will have mutual benefit."

"So while the management skills on the ACSC improve processes and procedures in the military, they also allow the individual to progress more quickly and confidently in their career path."

The 46-week ACSC at the Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham is designed for UK and international military officers as well as civil servants.

RN keen for uniform to be seen

INCIDENTS of abuse in Peterborough resulted in Service personnel at RAF Wittering being banned from wearing their uniform off-base – but the Royal Navy is still keen to see sailors wearing uniform ashore.

Airmen had reported being verbally abused and taunted by civilians in the nearby city, believed to be as a protest at UK involvement in the Middle East.

Strong moves have been made, championed by the National Recognition Study, to raise the profile of the Armed Forces by creating greater visibility of Service personnel in uniform.

The Naval Secretary, in support of this study, is leading on tri-Service work to define the circumstances in which uniform should be worn, is encouraged to be worn, and may or may not be worn in public.

The overall drive remains to strive for greater visibility of RN people in the public eye.

The key message from the office of the Naval Secretary is: "Whatever the outcome of the RAF Wittering issue, you are encouraged to continue the drive for higher visibility and to wear uniform in public."

Prime Minister Gordon Brown condemned the abuse, adding that personnel "should be encouraged to wear their uniform in public, they should be free to do so and the public will want to show their respect and gratitude."

Champions step up to find the answers

A TROUBLESHOOTER and a team of champions have been appointed to break the 'circle of death' which has frustrated users of the Armed Forces' pay and personnel system.

JPA – Joint Personnel Administration – had the tough job of replacing dozens of legacy systems, many of them bespoke and some on their last legs, to bring harmonisation and equality to pay, allowances and personnel practices across the three Services.

The £250 million system has been deemed an overall success by managers, and is now throwing up fewer problems than its predecessors.

There were problems with the first roll-out, with the RAF then the RN, partly because there was a decision to avoid overloading JPA with data from the existing systems.

Detailed information is becoming easier to extract, according to Col Jeremy Taylor, Assistant Director Military Services at the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA).

"Bringing all the systems together, we have one version of the truth," said Col Taylor.

"There is one single source of data, and we can identify how many people are in an area at a certain time, or how many – and who – are on a ship."

"We can track individuals – there is much greater visibility."

"There is also one set of training needed across the Services."

One problem which persists with JPA is not the hardware but the information which is being added – there is a greatly-increased responsibility on individuals to handle their own matters through the 'self-service' element.

"If the right data does not go in then we cannot crank the handle and get someone's pay in Euros in Germany, for example," said Col Taylor.

Some personnel have found themselves losing allowances once JPA went live, and this is in part down to the fact that there is less room for interpretation – JPA is "ruthless" in applying the relevant rules, according to Col Taylor.

"By and large we have sorted out most of the gremlins in the system," he said.

"Most of the problems are now down to human error or inputting error."

One example was the soldier who, as a result of a minor misdemeanour, was handed down a military fine in excess of £24 million – a clerical error by his unit meant the offender's eight-figure Service number had been entered into the field where the

fine should have gone.

This was picked up by the system, but it demonstrates how important it is to input the correct information.

Another, specific to the RN, concerns overpayment to Reservists, and in part appears to be down to multiple inputting of attendance claims in error.

But Col Taylor agreed that those who got stuck in the JPA's version of the dockyard runaround – bounced between their unit administrators and the JPA enquiry centre (JPAC) – were getting a rough deal.

Horror stories of people going without pay for months, or having allowances clawed back, hit the headlines.

Until now there was nowhere to go beyond the JPAC – with some turning to Forces publications or Internet message boards to vent their frustration.

But now Col Taylor said that two more elements had been added to the process, providing a safety net through which no one should now fall.

First is the Service Requirement Management Group (SRMG), which will act as a 'champion of the people.'

If a query or problem is getting bogged down, they will take the matter up on behalf of the individual – which will avoid the scenarios which saw combatants on the front line in Afghanistan using up precious phone-calls to sort out pay queries or placate bank managers.

The JPA system also now has an online BAG (Business Administration Guide) which means that many queries about allowances can be sorted with just four clicks of the mouse.

Primarily for the use of unit administrators and career managers, the BAG is a single source of up-to-date JPA information and advice.

And if all else fails, at the end of the line is a new JPA 'ombudsman' who will handle any formal complaints from individuals who are unhappy with the way they have been treated by JPA.

The Complaints Cell will not only deal with problems, but will be in a good position to spot trends and allow managers to tweak JPA as necessary, whether by means of training, software adjustments or information.

SPVA JPA service complaints are now dealt with by the SPVA

Pay Allowances Casework and Complaints Cell (PACCC).

If you are experiencing any JPA-related problems you must in the first instance contact your unit HR, who will either resolve the issue or advise you to contact the JPAC Enquiry Centre on freephone 0800 085 3600 (mil 94560 3600).

When you have exhausted all the avenues above, and if your issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction, then you may wish to submit a formal complaint in writing to the address below.

The following information must be included:

■ Number, rank, name and Service,

■ Your contact details (including telephone number and email address),

■ Your unit HR contact details; Service Request or I-support number(s) and dates raised,

■ A summary of your complaint with full supporting documentation.

The mail address is SPVA JPA Complaints, MP 600, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX; by email to SPVA-JPA-Complaints@spva.mod.uk; or by fax to 94561 2605 (0141 224 2605).



Moving visit for civic party

SMART suits and gold chains are perhaps not the normal rig in the Damage Repair Instructional Unit (DRIU) at HMS Excellent, but then lord mayors are not usually members of damage control parties.

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cllr Mike Blake, and Lady Mayoress Mrs Susie Sanderson paid an official visit to Whale Island, where they were given a tour of the training establishment, viewed the state gun carriage, and toured the facilities.

They were shown new accommodation blocks,

Phoenix Building and the Fire Fighting Training Unit.

The civic VIPs saw a practical demonstration on board a moving ship simulator at the DRIU (above).

Lt Greg Callis, RN Damage Control Officer, said: "The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress got to witness an element of the Sea Survival course in which damage control was carried out."

"This course encourages teamwork, which is important when dealing with incidents such as ships taking damage."

Painting depicts gallant Glowworm

TROPHY number 26066 depicts one of the most stirring actions by a Royal Navy ship in wartime – the ramming of German cruiser Admiral Hipper by destroyer HMS Glowworm on April 8 1940.

The encounter was by chance – Glowworm was part of a substantial force, but had turned back to search for a man overboard.

On spotting the Hipper, Lt Cdr Gerald Roope, the CO of Glowworm, made an unsuccessful torpedo attack.

With his ship severely damaged and little left in the weapons locker, Roope decided to use his ship as a weapon, ramming the German cruiser, as shown in the print (right) which is on the books of the RN Trophy Store.

Admiral Hipper was badly damaged by the Glowworm, putting her out of the war for several months.

Despite this her CO, Kapitän zur See Hellmuth Heye, was impressed by the British spirit and spent an hour rescuing more than 30 sailors who had survived the sinking of their destroyer, and ensuring they were well-treated.

Heye's respect for Roope's gallantry went further – he sent a message via the Red Cross recommending Roope for a decoration, and the British officer was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross – the first occasion the highest British military honour was awarded on the evidence and recommendation of the enemy.



HMS Glowworm rams the Admiral Hipper

Have your shout on personnel matters

ARE you up to date with the latest personnel policy initiatives?

Have you heard about Project Fisher, the Key Worker Living Programme (KWLP), Post Operational Stress Management (POSM), the introduction of Recovery Cells, RN Fitness Test Reminder Cards, the replacement of the Naval Discipline Act by the Armed Forces Act 2006?

If not then you have probably not attended one of the Divisional Regimental Support Team (DRST) presentations or seen any of the Personnel Support Briefs (PSB) that are produced on a termly basis and distributed inside the cover of the 2-6 DVD.

You can also access a soft copy through the RNWeb intranet and via RNCom and Naval Families Federation websites on the Internet.

The DRST work from Fleet HQ and have been busy since their formation in December 2005 visiting approximately 200 units and establishments where RN and RM personnel are serving to bring them up to date with the latest information on personnel initiatives and more importantly receive feedback on your views on personnel matters.

Visits start with a half-hour Personnel Update presentation, followed by discussions in peer groups (officers, SRs, JRs) facilitated by a team member where you have an opportunity to express your opinions on what you like or dislike in the personnel field.

The discussion periods also provide an opportunity for the team to explain some of the detail and rationale of the initiatives being implemented.

Your feedback forms part of the evidence that is used to influence current and future personnel policy and to inform senior officers (the Navy Board, 2SL, CINCFleet, Heads of Fighting Arms) of the current perception of Naval Service personnel.

As an example of the effectiveness of such feedback, concerns regarding JPA in its early days were fed back and recognised at the highest level which resulted in the formation of the JPA Support Team to troubleshoot, providing extra training and guidance to administration staff and personnel managers as well as giving support to individuals by dealing directly with the JPAC Enquiry Centre (see main story, left).

In addition to going on the road, the Command WOs often accompany their respective head of fighting arm or other members of the Navy Board on visits to units and establishments, so look out for them – they are influential people and are always delighted to talk.

If you have any queries regarding personnel or executive issues and are not sure who to talk to then contact a member of the team – contact details are in all editions of the PSB – who will at least be able to put you in contact with the relevant person if they cannot answer the question themselves.

The DRST is also more than happy to present to family groups and hear their feedback – contact the team on 02392 625933 to arrange a visit.





Once upon a time at a base called Yeovilton...

MOST children enjoy a bedtime story with mum or dad, but that is not always possible in the world of Service children.

With parents employed on overseas detachment or living away from the family home, there is often something missing as the little ones snuggle up in bed.

But now a team based at RNAS Yeovilton have been working hard on a project that will hopefully make a difference to the children who face periods of separation from parents.

A recording studio has been available from the middle of last month enabling Service personnel to be recorded whilst telling a story with the use of a digital recorder.

The story is then downloaded to a computer and any mistakes are edited out.

Music and sound effects are added and the final story is put on to a CD.

A personal message can be included and the end product is a very professional-sounding story reading by the parent.

Children will be able to hear the voice of their parent whenever they want, and parents feel that they are doing something tangible for their children.

'Story Book Parents' can be a lifeline for families and could play a key role in helping to maintain the family unit during the period of separation.

Anyone going on deployment is encouraged to give the scheme a try.

The Yeovilton scheme is a version of the 'Story Book Dads' project that originated in Dartmoor Prison and has been in action for four years – that project is now a registered charity.

Dartmoor project managers have been supporting the Yeovilton venture and trained the HMS Heron team last month.

The fact that Yeovilton is leading the way in the Senior Service is down to Sarah Leach, who raised the issue after seeing an article about a similar Army project at Tidworth Garrison called 'Story Book Soldiers'.

The Heron version has been funded by the Annington Trust, which paid for the necessary equipment.

Big thanks are also due to Chaplaincy Team Leader Simon Beveridge, who agreed to the project team converting the sacristy room into the Story Book Parents recording studio.

Those involved in this project are community worker Tracey Hallett, Ruth David of the Education Centre, chaplain support worker David Garbett and Nicola Davidson, volunteer coordinator for the project.

Donations of surplus good-quality children's books are always gratefully received.

For more details about this project contact Tracey Hallett on 01935 841686.



HMS Campbeltown, currently patrolling east of Suez

NETSO gain for deployed ships

THE RN, as a champion of Investors in People, is eager to get its people to invest in themselves.

So when HMS Campbeltown deployed to the Gulf last autumn, the frigate's Executive Officer, Lt Cdr Colin Williams, looked at options to help the ship's company do just that.

"We had had an Education Officer embarked with us during our earlier deployment to the Gulf who was received very well by the ship's company, and was deemed to be a very positive aspect of the trip," said Lt Cdr Williams.

"Naturally, when we were tasked to deploy again we were keen to get another Education Officer on board to provide the same service."

The request was put in, and during the first stages of the frigate's Operation Calash tour, Lt Andy Grierson, a Naval Education and Training Services Officer (NETSO), was embarked.

"As a NETSO my role is to support the work of the Education and Resettlement Officer on board front-line units such as HMS Campbeltown, and to provide a link to the services offered back in base port," said Lt Grierson.

"No two days on board are the same for me."

"I talk individually with up to ten members of the ship's company per day, who take the time out of their working day to see me."

"Together we look at ways that we can support their personal and professional development goals."

"This can vary from conducting Lantern exams [Literacy and Numeracy Testing and Education in the Royal Navy] to get people qualified for promotion, establishing GCSE courses on board, looking at the various civilian accreditation options available to personnel, arranging funding, arranging courses and, equally importantly, helping people to plan their resettlement."

"I also look to reinvigorate the educational system on board and, by running workshops on coaching, motivation and presentations, I help with the soft skills needed for divisional work."

"There's a misconception that Education Officers are only concerned with academic subjects, but some of the more interesting



Lt Andy Grierson

courses I've been looking into recently for people on board include kite-surfing and belly-dancing.

"On HMS Campbeltown I have been very busy as everyone has their own personal goal that they'd like information on how to achieve."

"Another misconception is that deployments are not the best time to learn or study."

"In fact, deployments are a great time to do this. There are fewer distractions, people do find themselves with free time and there are lots of resources available."

"With increasing access to the Internet, help is just an email away."

"As well as the variety of people that I speak to, from the CO to the youngest sailor, I also get to visit the whole range of Devonport units, from the smaller Hydrographic units to the larger amphibious ships, submarines, frigates and satellite units."

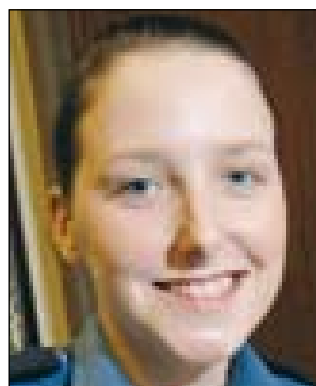
"Anywhere that there are RN personnel I am happy to go to offer my services."

Among those on board Campbeltown to have benefited from the NETSO's presence was Logs Rebecca Crowder, for whom it has opened up the prospect of advancement.

"Thanks to the NETSO I am now educationally-qualified to be promoted to leading hand – and he also helped arrange and fund a driving course for me," said Rebecca.

For AB(CIS) Amy Bennett the objective was a change of direction.

"I had been looking to branch transfer into the photographic specialisation for some time, and the NETSO was able to provide me



Logs Rebecca Crowder

with all the appropriate information and arrange photography courses for me to study whilst I'm deployed," she said.

At the other end of his career is LS Oscar Wilde, who has almost completed 22 years in the Navy and is thinking of life outside.

"Without the advice of NETSO I would have missed out on a lot of my resettlement entitlement," he said.

"Together we have produced a plan for my resettlement that will help me in my future career."

Campbeltown's LRO, Lt Sweetman, is equally positive about the benefits of having a NETSO embarked.

"The NETSO is able to provide me with specialist advice and support that is necessary for the ship to have a well-run education department."

"He knows the ins and outs of



LS Oscar Wilde – planning for resettlement

all of the procedures and is on top of all the latest developments."

"It is useful having a subject-matter expert to refer to when I am unsure."

Lt Grierson is part of a team of seven NETSOs, three based in Devonport, three in Portsmouth and one in Faslane.

"Over the past year we have been able to conduct over 60 visits to various units and interview over 2,000 RN personnel," said Lt Grierson.

"This demand is only set to increase as more and more ships and boats realise what services we offer and what benefits we can bring them."

"We're already getting repeat bookings as soon as we leave, sometimes up to a year in advance, as the ship wants to have us back."

That is something of which the Commanding Officer of HMS Campbeltown, Cdr Gordon Abernethy, is very much aware.

"I was very keen to have a NETSO on board for part of our deployment, just as I can understand why other units are keen to get them embarked," said Cdr Abernethy.

"They have been shown to raise the ship's morale, providing more motivated and trainable sailors, which in turn enhances operational capability."

The frigate is on a seven-month deployment which has seen her supporting Operation Calash east of Suez and combating piracy in the Red Sea before heading for the Northern Gulf in support of Operation Telic.

FOST tours US training facilities

FLAG Officer Sea Training (FOST) Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson has had a week-long whistlestop tour of key US training and experimentation commands on the east coast of America.

At the US Naval College at Annapolis, the FOST party – which also included Commodore BRNC Cdre Martin Alabaster and Deputy FOST Cdre Nick Lambert – was hosted by the Superintendent, Vice Admiral Jeffrey Fowler USN and College Commandant Capt Margaret Klein USN.

One discussion centred on the current American focus on cultural and regional awareness training for all officers, an initiative which recognises that future leaders will often need to deploy to unfamiliar regions to undertake a wider range of tasks than has previously been needed – the Expeditionary Diplomat concept.

Admiral Ibbotson then travelled to Norfolk, Virginia, for further briefings at local commands, including a call on Commander US Second Fleet, Vice Admiral Marty Chanik USN.

One key meeting was with Rear Admiral Don Quinn, Commander Strike Force Training Atlantic, who is responsible for training and certification of carrier strike groups and ships deployed independently.

Admiral Quinn said he hopes to visit the UK soon to explore his interest in deploying US surface combatants for Operational Sea Training with FOST, particularly in FOST's tailored training for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as in the force protection serials.

Admiral Ibbotson called in at the new Navy Expeditionary Combat Command at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, and visited the Tactical Training Group Atlantic (TACTRAGRULANT) facilities in Dam Neck, where he was shown a student class undertaking 'Fleet Synthetic Training' – on the agenda were opportunities for greater integration of RN ships, submarines and aircraft into US battle group synthetic training.

Options were also explored for increased collaboration in the major certification exercises which all US strike groups must successfully complete before they deploy to the Med and Indian Ocean regions in support of Op Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Active Endeavour, and in support of capacity building around the African continent.

During their visit to Second Fleet HQ the FOST team was hosted by Cdre Bob Mansergh, currently Deputy Director of Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence.

FOST was briefed on the cutting-edge work conducted on a range of key issues including allied integration with the US Maritime HQ with Maritime Operations Centre (MOC) concept which rolls out across the USN this year.

This will provide a global network of MOCs monitoring all maritime activity and providing the backbone of Maritime Domain Awareness for the Americans.

He was also briefed on development on a range of initiatives aimed at assisting NATO's Allied Command Transformation to exploit the agility which maritime forces bring to global security operations more effectively.

After an exhausting week, FOST returned to the UK armed with a very wide range of things to think about as he and his senior staff consider the way ahead for individual and collective training in the RN.

EDUCATION

The Best Start In Life



Wonderful week at West Hill Park

WEST Hill Park School in Titchfield packs a full programme of activities into their weeks.

Recently six young orators distinguished themselves when they secured first and third places in the Fareham Rotary Youth Speaks public-speaking competition.

The school has won this prestigious contest four years out of five and headmaster Edward Hudson is justifiably proud of this record.

One team of articulate 11-year-olds spoke with passion against the mollycoddling 'Nanny State' which is making their childhood so miserable. They deplored being wrapped in cottonwool and demanded the right to play conkers without having to wear goggles.

The other team gave a 15-minute presentation on The Forgotten Heroes which secured the coveted trophy. The three spoke eloquently and passionately about the plight of the Armed Forces and their unheralded return to British shores.

The whole team, self-styled 'Service brats', told of their fears for the safety of their fathers when the latter undergo stints of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.

As Edward Thicknesse said: "My father slipped back into the cycle of life without causing a single ripple." He reminded the audience that it was high time that we learned to separate our dislike of government policy from our

support of the Forces.

Popular author Robert Muchamore delivered a spirited talk to the pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7. Some of the children were lucky enough to be given a signed preview copy of his new book *The Sleepwalker*, the ninth in his successful *Cherub* series of spy novels.

Robert Muchamore spoke candidly about his life as a writer. His manner was easy and natural as he recalled the long journey to his present status as best-selling author. Since his visit the library has been bombarded with requests

for any of the *Cherub* series.

Year 5 pupils discovered dragons were alive and thriving following a visit by 'Reptile Celebrities' (pictured above). The children had the opportunity to meet Bearded Dragons, a Boa Constrictor and a Royal Python, and study the science surrounding their habitat and survival.

If you are looking for an independent coeducational preparatory school with an holistic approach to learning, West Hill Park would love to hear from you. Please contact the registrar on 01329 840400.

Harmony at Wells

WELLS is one of the oldest schools in England but has never been traditionalist and has always been enthusiastic to embrace new ideas.

In 1969 it became one of the first independent schools to become fully coeducational and even today Wells is one of the few coeducational schools that can claim to be genuinely 50/50. Similarly the staff structure reflects the school's commitment to equality.

The decision in the 1970s to incorporate the specialist music school means that Wells remains the only specialist music school to operate within the context of a conventional school. This remarkable innovation has contributed greatly to the special feel of Wells.

The Wells experience is founded on the principle that people should feel that they can be themselves, as long as this means thinking about other people first.

Significant emphasis is placed on acceptance. Wells is a community where people are accepted for who they are. For all, there is the chance to live in a world where being friends with extraordinary people is accepted as the norm. There is a refreshing sense of mutual respect between pupils whatever their talents.

The link with the Cathedral bestows upon the school an ethos where work, study and spirituality are combined in a creative mix that runs in harmony with the entire school family.

RM heads up Oratory

THE Oratory School is the only all boys' Catholic boarding and day school in the UK and educates boys of all backgrounds.

The school is housed in approximately 400 acres of beautiful Oxfordshire countryside close to the M4 and M40 with easy access to airports.

The Oratory has an international reputation for a first-class all-round education and as a school of only 400 boys, small classes and close supervision are provided.

At the heart of the school is the Christian vision of its founder, John Henry Cardinal Newman, the great 19th-Century thinker and writer. The school attracts boys locally and from all over the world both from Catholic families and other faiths.

The school motto of *cor ad cor loquitur* (heart speaking to heart) underlines the pastoral dimensions and caring community atmosphere of the school. Entry is invited at 11+, 13+ and into the Sixth Form.

The headmaster, Clive Dytor, a former Royal Marines Commando, believes that leadership skills play an important part in boys' education today. The school therefore offers a full range of extra-curricular activities including CCF, Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise, Prefect Training, and Oxbridge preparation with 99 per cent of leavers obtaining their first choice of university.

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Tel: 01753 594297 Email: admissions@qvs.org.uk
Fax: 01753 594298 Website: www.qvs.org.uk

Apple of admiral's eye

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy.

Kelly offers a co-educational full and weekly boarding, and day education for pupils aged 11-18. It is a school of 370 students of whom half are boarders. Kelly offers all the facilities of a larger school, while retaining the advantages in the individual care and class size of a smaller school.

The Preparatory School is co-educational and has a further 200 pupils. The Prep School shares many of the facilities of the senior school including boarding from Year 5.

Kelly provides a high-quality, well-balanced education with a strong commitment to a whole range of extracurricular activities. The staff are fully involved seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

The sporting record of the school is very strong; Kelly has a national reputation in swimming, rugby and athletics, while hockey and netball teams have achieved county and regional success.

At the same time, Kelly is particularly proud of its music and drama and delighted to be taking advantage of the new Performing Arts Centre which opened in July last year.

Diary focus at Rookesbury

PIPPA Harris-Burland, headmistress at Rookesbury Park School in Wickham, writes: "In my experience one of the most important, demanding and fulfilling roles in a school is that of a form tutor... if you do the job properly!

"The role of tutor means you may be required to be: counsellor, mother, father, friend, confidante, or Devil's advocate. If a child is not happy, he will not learn – it's simple. So let's KISS and Keep It Sweetly Simple!

"In my school we have tutor periods at the beginning and end of each day. The start of the day is crucial to how the rest of the day unfolds. If you haven't done your homework, or the dog ate it, you need to tell someone.

"This is a time to ensure the children in your class have everything they need for the day ahead, from exercise books to pencils. We always keep a supply of rulers in the teacher's desk. Give them out when they are needed. Every child has the right to learn.

"The end of the day is just as important. With a little help even the most disorganised child can keep their homework diary (most important book in the school bag) in the zipped top pocket.

"I ask the children to lay out their books on their desk, before transferring them into the bag. A laminated check list stuck on the front of the desk can work wonders. Ask the child to colour it in big bold colours, so he is involved in the process.

"One of the most important sharing activities is that of setting personal targets.

"When I asked my last Year 4 tutor group what they wanted to achieve, one came up with: 'Tie my shoe laces.' Another said: 'Get my spellings right every week.'

"These are great targets, but are worthless without a measurable and specific time set.

"Establish short and long term targets. And most importantly celebrate successes, in your assemblies, with parents, in the homework diary.

"We all love to hear something good. A phone call or a quick word at the end of the day means the world to a parent.

"Above all enjoy and have fun with them."

St John's scores highly

ST JOHN'S College in Southsea has been judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted, the official body for the inspection of UK schools, following a thorough inspection of the school's boarding provision.

The report rated the popular school's boarding service as 'exceptionally high quality'. In the inspection, the Ofsted team found St John's 'provides outstanding care to the boarders it accommodates'.

Areas of particular strength identified were: 'excellent relationships between staff and pupils', 'the young people are treated with respect and warmth' and described the boarders as 'confident, polite and outgoing'.

Also praised were the 'strong leadership' of the headmaster and senior staff; the 'excellent' policies, procedures and systems; the high standard of accommodation; and the large range of activities on offer.

Headmaster of St John's College, Nigel Thorne was delighted with the report and said: "We are all very proud with the outcome of the inspection.

"We work very hard to give every child a thoroughly rewarding, exciting, challenging and safe experience. The excellent report is a fine tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone involved – staff and pupils alike."

Celebrate with Queen Victoria

ALTHOUGH Queen Victoria School in Scotland was officially opened on September 28 1909 by King Edward VII, the principles which led at the heart of the school's origins still prevail today.

To mark this occasion, QVS have numerous events planned over the year. These include:

Family fun day: taking place at the end of May, this fun-filled day aims to bring together all the students, parents and teachers of QVS and residents from the local community.

Grand Day passing out parade: this promises to be a prestigious occasion as students and teachers alike put on their ceremonial uniforms and parade in front of a very special guest (yet to be confirmed). This takes place on Friday, June 27, just before the summer break.

Parade Sunday: students don their ceremonial uniforms once again to mark the official opening of the school on Sunday September 28.

If you would like more information, please call 0131 310 2927 or visit www.qvs.org.uk.

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Brontë backdrop for girls at Casterton

CASTERTON School has been established for nearly 200 years and its pupils have included Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë and cookery supremo Claire MacDonald.

Casterton continues to deserve its reputation as a leading academic girls boarding school and is a Top 20 Girls Boarding School, based on percentage of A and B grades at A-level in 2007.

Intellectual rigour is at the heart of the curriculum, with intellectual character even more so.

However, as an outstanding boarding school it also provides all girls with superb opportunities for sporting, artistic and cultural development.

All girls receive an education which benefits from the 24 hour, seven days a week philosophy of a boarding school.

It is one of the very few girls boarding schools which is full boarding from 12+ and there is a full programme of events every weekend.

Specialist speakers on a whole range of topics from careers talk about law, medicine and forensic science. Other speakers discuss a range of topics from cyber safety, to studying sport in the USA and enjoying wine at the Sixth Form Wine Society.

Trips and tours throughout the UK, Europe and further afield through sports tours to Barbados and Dubai ensure that all girls leave Casterton with the qualifications, courage, strength and creativity to face the adult world of work and life, with a life-long group of friendships.

Recent successes at the end of the Easter term have included:

U18 tennis team are now in the Senior Girls National Finals, reaching the final eight. One of the eight is from a services family.

The clarinet trio has reached the final of the National Pro-Corda Competition, to be held in March. Esther-Rose Bartholomew's father is in the Navy.

Caroline Morphet has won the Living Edge Schools Competition at the Lowry Gallery in Manchester. Over 50 schools competed including the highly academic Manchester day schools. Caroline is from a forces family.

Casterton has launched its specialist coaching courses to take place in the holidays. The coaching which begins with tennis at Easter and will feature international coaches in their sport and will be both day and residential for current and prospective pupils from 8-18.

For further details please contact Emma Clark on 015242 79299.

RHS pupils take up their oars

SIX pupils at the Royal Hospital School are taking part in two team challenges raising funds for Action Medical Research.

Matthew Jones, Michael Barker, Christopher Rigge and Huw Myatt were joined by former pupil Anna Rigge in the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon, as *Navy News* went to press.

Teachers at the school and team coaches Les Thompson and Lee Munday said: "This is more than a race – it is an adventure and the young people involved have an immense amount of determination and stamina."

"Crossing the finish line will give them an enormous amount of satisfaction and raising money for such a good cause makes it all the more worthwhile."

Joined by fellow climber Daniel McRink, four of the canoeists will be taking part in the Three Peaks Challenge in July. With the support of their driver and coach, the Royal Hospital School team will



Canoeists from the Royal Hospital School in Suffolk

ascend and descend the highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales in less than 24 hours.

Through sponsorship the teams hope to raise some £3,000 which will go towards vital research into areas such as premature birth, sickle cell disease and stroke.

Forging ahead at Duke of York's

VALLEY Forge Military Academy and College in Wayne, Pennsylvania, USA and the Duke of York's Royal Military school are delighted to announce the first fruits of their partnership.

Graham Sisson, a school prefect in his last year at the school in Dover, is to be the inaugural Duke of York's Fellow at Valley Forge. In this capacity Graham will spend a month at Valley Forge after the end of his studies in September 2008 acting as a staff instructor before going on to study politics provisionally at Exeter University.

Graham won this award in his capacity as Senior Under Officer in the Duke of York's unique ceremonial tradition, which stretches back to the foundation of the school in Chelsea in 1801 by the second son of George III, Field Marshal Frederick, Duke of York.

The school, along with its smaller sister school in Scotland, are the only schools in Britain which have the right to bear colours. Graham will preside over Grand Day in July 2008 when these colours will be trooped before an audience which has traditionally numbered royalty and leaders of the armed services.

Tony McGeorge, the President of Valley Forge and Charles Johnson, headmaster at Duke of York's, are keen to explore other links between the two institutions. Charles said: "I am conscious of the enormous shared history between our two great nations and their armed forces. We want to broaden the minds of our young people and increase their understanding of each other's nations."

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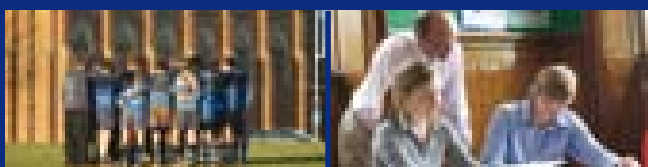
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Colourful Hazlegrove

SET within 200 acres of parkland in Somerset, Hazlegrove is a splash of colour in an increasingly grey and conforming world.

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Staff believe that education should be broad and that it is as much about doing and thinking as it is about writing and remembering; attitudes and values are as important as knowledge and understanding and that the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is fundamental.

St John's School inspires in Sidmouth

WITH its well respected educational heritage, its beautiful location and impressive range of facilities, St John's School in Sidmouth certainly provides a happy and inspiring environment for its pupils.

The school caters for children from the age of two in its nursery department right up to the age of 13 in the main school. The school also offers a range of boarding options from full boarding to flexi or even weekend boarding for day pupils, which many of the children really enjoy.

With a strong tradition of Forces children in the school, St John's believes it is well positioned to offer the very best all-round boarding solution to Forces families and has recently launched a special bursary for the Forces.

Importantly, the school is very

flexible about their approach to boarding. Headmistress Angel Parry-Davies said: "We understand that Forces families have particular needs – we try to be as flexible as possible to make sure that the whole boarding experience is as positive for parents as it is for our children."

"The school's capacity of around 200 day children and an additional 70 boarders makes it large enough to offer a broad study programme yet small enough to retain the special family feel that is so valued by everyone."

She explained: "We treat each child as an individual and aim to prepare our children to face the future with confidence and self-assurance."

"I am often asked by people what it is that make St John's different. We always encourage people to visit because we think they will feel what a special place it is."

Shelter at Shebbear

TO many people a boarding school in the English countryside conjures up scenes of a bygone age: misty, dewy mornings, a place where the air is healthy and good for you, where children can climb trees, camp out and do the things that you read about in the Enid Blyton books.

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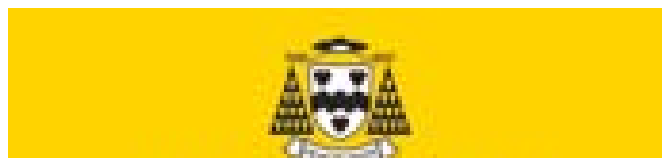


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It is now translated into a thriving Voluntary Aided coeducational, academic day and boarding School catering for the top 20 to 25 per cent of the ability range.

Boarding houses are in the care of resident staff with small dormitories or single study bedrooms and generous common rooms. Since boarding is on a termly basis, there are activities arranged for each weekend.

Cranbrook expects and obtains high standards of personal behaviour and self discipline. Day students live within 10km by road of the school and this produces a school with a close knit community.

The school is situated in the small Wealden market town of Cranbrook, in rural surroundings, but with the bonus of close road and rail links to major ports, airports and to London.

Specialists in Service education

THE Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) provides a high-quality service in response to any questions or concerns Service families may have about the education of their children.

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CEAS will respond to direct enquiries from Service families, and will also provide information to other organisations and support services that may be working with a Service family.

It has specific expertise in boarding school advice and special educational needs.

Contact CEAS for any advice relating to your children's education, telephone 01980 618244 or email enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk.

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Wed 23 April 08: 1000-1200
at Regional Resettlement Centre
Portsmouth, Rodney Block, HMS
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To register please contact
Grace Tyrrell on 02392 724595
or email: GTyrrell@ctp.org.uk.

Thur 24 April 08: 1000-1200
at Regional Resettlement Centre
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Please visit www.jobs.soton.ac.uk and apply on-line, or call: 023 8059 2750. The closing date for this position is 14 April 2008 at 12 noon. Please quote the reference number 2133-08-E.

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Busy week on Fort Vic for Barnsley cadets



Plenty of water was expended while training on board RFA Fort Victoria – fortunately the ship was using seawater, not fresh water

CADETS from the Barnsley unit TS Diomedé were joined by air cadets from 148 Squadron for a week-long visit to the Yorkshire town's affiliated ship, RFA Fort Victoria.

The party – 11 Sea Cadets, seven Marine Cadets and six Air Cadets, stayed on board the replenishment ship, currently berthed in Portsmouth Naval Base.

A visit was laid on to RAF Odiham, where the youngsters were lectured on sea survival equipment and saw some of the base armoury.

They sat in the cockpit of a Chinook helicopter and tried their hand at firefighting alongside the base's dedicated fire crew.

Back in Portsmouth the cadets also visited HMS Victory, the RN Museum, the Royal Marines Museum and the RN Submarine

Museum, as well as putting their skills to the test at Action Stations in the Historic Dockyard.

When things got a little competitive – such as on the Action Stations climbing wall and some of the simulators – the Marine Cadets proved they had the edge over their air cadet rivals.

On board Fort Vic the cadets received basic firefighting training and learned something of damage control.

Water was liberally sprayed around the decks – fortunately the weather was unseasonably warm – and they also received some first aid training.

An expedition was organised in the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, and highlight of the evenings' entertainment was a fashion show with costumes made from bin bags, cardboard boxes and other recyclables.



The Barnsley cadets tried their hand at firefighting training while visiting RAF Odiham

Tributes paid to Intrepid stalwart

A POPULAR volunteer who worked hard for both the Sea Cadets and the RNA has died aged 66 after a long illness.

CPO (SCC) David Stocker devoted 20 years to the Cheshunt unit TS Intrepid, and was also a familiar figure in the Cheshunt RNA branch.

Indeed, his stoic acceptance of his illness and the amputation of a leg meant he did not lose his smile and wit, and the RNA branch recognised this by making him Shipmate of the Year and holder of the prestigious Ron Joy Trophy.

He was always a strong supporter of youth development, and was himself a keen amateur boxer in his younger days as well as singing with the Muswell Hill Operatics Society.

David's funeral was held at the Methodist Church in Hoddesdon, and TS Intrepid provided a 20-strong guard of honour.

Also in attendance were former Sea Cadets who are now serving with the Royal Navy or RFA.

Officials from the Corps included Cheshunt's Commanding Officer, CPO Sam McAdam, and the RNA branches at Cheshunt, Enfield and Edmonton were also represented.

David's wife Janet maintains the family link with both organisations, as she has secretarial roles with both the RNA and Sea Cadets.

Constant crew cut a dash at Barbers' event

THE Officer in Charge and Admin Officer of the Tooting and Balham unit were delighted to take up an invitation to attend the reception and banquet held in the Mansion House to celebrate an ancient City tradition.

The event marked the septcentenary of the admission of the first recorded Master of the Worshipful Company of Barbers in 1308, Richard le Barbour, who was asked to take responsibility for protecting the trade of barbers (which also spilled over into the trade of surgeons, hence the blood-red and bandage-white barber's pole) from charlatans and undesirables.

TS Constant provided a carpet guard of ten cadets under the charge of PPO Katie Burton – the first major event for most of them, coming through to replace older cadets who have moved on.

Most of the group – the others were LCs Smith and Bond, AC Williams, OCs Greig and Penfold, Cds Parnell, McEwan, Greig and Crozier – had a chance to talk to the VIP guests, Princess Alexandra and the Lord Mayor of London, and the unit received a number of complimentary mentions during the evening's speeches.

New units welcomed north of the border

OBAN and Wick units have passed their affiliation inspection to become the newest unit to join the Sea Cadet organisation.

Having completed its 'Colours' ceremony in front of a packed room of family,

friends and VIPs, the Oban ship's company (13 cadets and seven staff) were formally inspected by Capt Jonathan Fry, Director of Operations.

Regular classes comprising of Seamanship and 'New Entry' work books followed for the unit, together with a much-deserved

'stand easy'.

Suitably refreshed, the cadets then returned to the main deck to take part in an inter-divisional evolution – and with a prize being up for grabs the competition was lively.

The famous 'gun-run' exercise proved to be hugely entertaining, with Starboard Division, narrowly

beating Port Division to win the Divisional Challenge Shield.

At the end of the evening, Captain Fry congratulated the cadets and their staff for reaching such a high standard in such a short space of time – the unit has been operational for less than twelve months.

Oban's new name will be TS Pharos, and the unit will be affiliated to the new Northern Lighthouse Board ship of the same name.

The unit was parented through its 'embryonic' stage by Lochaber unit, which sent cadets down to attend Oban's enrolment evening when the first recruits were taken on board – ten signed up as a result.

At the time Oban's Officer in Charge, S/Lt Ewan McCuish, said of the unit's first parade night: "It will be the first Sea Cadet night in 45 years."

Derrick Warner, CO of the Lochaber Unit, said: "Coming from a town with a strong maritime heritage, Oban has a strong committee and an excellent team of staff – they have the potential to be a very strong unit."

"They already have a motor boat and access to a number of dinghies at the local yacht club."

It is hoped that a close partnership between the two units will develop over time.

Wick Sea Cadet Unit was set up as an embryo unit early in 2006 and has been going from strength to strength ever since.

The unit staged its formal affiliation inspection in February for Capt Fry, who said: "I shall have no hesitation in recommending to the Trustees that TS Campbell be accepted into the Sea Cadets."

TS Campbell meets for parade nights on Tuesday evenings at the Boys Brigade Hall, Henrietta St, Wick.

Anyone interested in joining, or being an adult officer or helper, would be welcome and should go along to one of the weekly meetings to find out more details.



Coventry cadets see the workings of HMS Portland's operations room

CADETS from the Coventry unit spent a day at sea training alongside the Royal Navy.

The 14 cadets, accompanied by three members of staff, travelled to Weymouth, where they stayed overnight at the Sea Cadet Training Centre.

They then joined Type 23 frigate HMS Portland, which was visiting her namesake town after a busy deployment to the Caribbean last year.

The cadets' visit was part of a Naval insight course arranged by the Coventry Royal Naval Careers Centre.

Once on board the cadets spent a day with their Royal Navy counterparts getting to see the various departments onboard a working warship.

They spent time on the bridge, in the operations

room, engineering and warfare sections.

Both cadets and staff had "an amazing time", and are all hoping to spend further time with the Royal Navy in the near future.

Lt Steve Warwick, the Commanding Officer, said: "We

thank the Coventry Royal Navy Careers Centre for arranging such a great visit.

"All of the cadets had a fantastic time discovering what it is like to live and work onboard a warship.

"They are all looking forward to future visits".

Guests share in Amazon's triumph

THE Commanding Officer and crewmen of HMS Triumph gave cadets at the Hinckley unit an insight into life on board a nuclear submarine.

Cdr Eric Sykes inspected the ship's company of TS Amazon, including a guard of honour, and chatted to the cadets.

He then spent the evening touring classes to see the type of activities undertaken, including seamanship, practical leadership tests, marine cadets training and – in the junior section – the making of Mother's Day cards (at which the cox'n of HMS Triumph proved

a dab hand).

At the end of the evening Cdr Sykes presented POC Jonathon Booker with the unit's burgee efficiency award for 2007, congratulating all the cadets for their achievement in securing the burgee for the fourth year running.

Lt (SCC) Neil Hartwell RNR, the CO of Hinckley, said it was a great honour for the unit that Cdr Sykes and his crew had attended to present the burgee, and he hoped that members of HMS Triumph would now be regular visitors.

Rewards for high achievers

OUTSTANDING achievements by Sea Cadets have been recognised at a ceremony at Goldsmiths' Hall in London.

The Jack Petchey Foundation, the London and Essex grant-making trust benefiting young people between the ages of 11 and 25, honoured more than 70 cadets with Achievement Awards.

Each winner was presented with a medallion to accompany a framed certificate and cheque for £300, which is to be used on a project or equipment of the winner's choice within the Sea Cadets.

In total more than £33,000 was given to the Corps by the Foundation through these awards.

The medallions were presented by Capt Jonathan Fry, the Captain of the Sea Cadets, who said: "I am delighted to be able to take the time to recognise the achievements and contribution of these young cadets."

"Each of them has set a tremendous example for their peers through their hard work and commitment, and it is a credit to their families and the Sea Cadets."

"This is the first time that the Jack Petchey Foundation has presented Achievement Awards to our cadets."

"It is outstanding that an organisation such as this takes the time to highlight the good that our young people do, and long may this work continue."

Chris Bullock, Foundation Grants Officer for East London, said: "The Sea Cadets are a fantastic organisation and the Jack Petchey Foundation is delighted to be able to recognise the achievements of some of their young people for the first time with such a grand ceremony."

"The cadets receiving awards have each demonstrated a tremendous willingness to contribute in addition to their outstanding achievement."

"It is a true mark of this contribution that their peers have nominated them for these awards, and hopefully they will continue to serve as an inspiration to other cadets seeking to follow their example."

Unit presented with 2007 burgee

STEVENAGE unit has been formally presented its burgee in recognition of the high standards maintained in 2007.

Michael Burn of John Lewis was the reviewing officer, and the evening gave cadets a chance to demonstrate the skills they have picked up at the unit.

CO Lt Margaret Coates said: "It is an honour for the unit to receive this award and is a fair reflection on the hard work of the staff and cadets over the last year."

A number of Stevenage cadets have been invited to join the massed band which will play at the RN v Army rugby match at Twickenham in May.

Pupils band together to raise funds for charity

CADETS from Lincolnshire have been raising funds for – and raising the profile of – Servicemen and women deployed in the war zones of the world.

A number of RN cadets at Stamford Endowed Schools CCF, along with a member of staff who served with the Scots Guards during the Falklands, created wristbands to raise cash for SSAFA and Combat Stress.

More than 2,000 bands have already been sold, contributing to the coffers of these Service charities.

But their creators also wanted to use them to increase awareness, and with a little help from some high-profile names, that is exactly what is being achieved.

A band was seen on the wrist of England captain Paul Collingwood during the Test matches and one-day internationals series in England, and the RAF Red Arrows lined up for the camera in front of their aircraft to publicise the campaign.

Bands have been ordered in the United States, Canada, Australia and Brunei, and Richard Brewster, from the school's CCF, said that they hope their small campaign will show that people do care about the troops in the front line, and show the troops that people back in the UK are thinking about them.

The RN section of the CCF is affiliated to HMS Nottingham, whose latest patrol has taken her to the South Atlantic.

Eastbourne and Gateshead close to prize

SEA Cadet units finished second and third in this year's St Dunstan's 'Go the Distance' challenge.

An Air Training Corps squadron from Jersey took top spot, just pipping the Eastbourne and Gateshead units to the honours.

Cadets and adult instructors from all three units are due to visit the National Training Centre in Ovingdean, near Brighton, this month, where they will receive their trophies from writer and broadcaster Peter Snow.

Also attending will be the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, Lt Gen Andrew Ridgway.

The competition challenges cadets to cover the distance of a half marathon – 13.1 miles – in an imaginative and innovative way.

Jersey used a land/sea/air approach by walking, kayaking and flying; TS Eastbourne restored an old field gun and pulled it along the prom in their home town, and TS Flamingo pulled their boats up the River Tyne for the required distance.



● Work starts on the frame which will be used in the process to create the hull of the TS Jack Petchey

Work starts on new cadet training ship

THE contract for the new Marine Society and Sea Cadets training ship has been awarded to the Bridgend Boat Company Ltd of Plymouth.

TS Jack Petchey will take some two years to build, and the contract is for £2.5 million.

The Marine Society and Sea Cadets launched an appeal to build a 24-metre powered training craft in 2006 during the charity's 250th anniversary.

The target was reached in just over a year, thanks in no small part to a £1 million donation from the Jack Petchey Foundation.

And despite bids from yards around the world, it was a British company which came up trumps.

Work has already started on the initial frame construction, from which the yard will build the plug to create the hull.

Similar in design to the Corps' existing power training vessel, TS John Jerwood, the new ship will allow much more sea time for cadets on six-day voyages at sea.

Over her anticipated 25-year lifespan the TS Jack



● How the TS Jack Petchey will look

Picture: Houlder Ltd

Petchey will be home to around 16,000 people and 3,000 adult volunteers, and she will act as a platform for learning skills such as engineering, electronic communication and chart systems, cooking and stewarding, the need to be vigilant and keep watch, the value of living in a tidy and disciplined environment, and the need to employ sound social

and communication skills when working in a team.

Mike Cornish, chief executive of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, said: "We are delighted to have been able to award the contract for the TS Jack Petchey to a British shipyard as it contributes in a small way to ensuring those technical and boatbuilding skills for which Britain as a seafaring

nation can rightly be proud are kept alive."

Bridgend director Peter Humphrey said: "It's a large contract and will give the company a lot of stability."

TS Jack Petchey is expected to enter service in early 2010.

She will be based at the RN Reserve Training Centre at HMS President, close to Tower Bridge.

Corps supports Jersey inquiries

THE following statement has been issued by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), the parent charity of the Sea Cadet Corps, regarding police investigations in Jersey:

"In relation to the ongoing enquiry into a number of allegations of historical sexual and physical abuse of children on the island, the States of Jersey Police have been investigating a number of individuals, some of whom had previously been connected with Jersey Sea Cadet unit."

"Both the current personnel at the Sea Cadet unit and the trustees of the parent charity, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), in the UK have been fully supporting the investigation for some months and will continue to do so."

"The police have informed the MSSC that any connection to the unit is now playing a very minor part in the investigation."

"Assurances have also been received from the officer leading the investigation that there is no connection between the Sea Cadets and the current enquiries centred on Haut de la Garenne care home, which closed in 1987."

"Jersey Sea Cadet unit is a volunteer-led youth charity."

"The Marine Society and Sea Cadets takes its duty of care towards its young people very seriously and inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated."

"Procedures are regularly reviewed and robust child protection policies and processes are in place."

"All adult volunteers in the organisation are required to undergo a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) Disclosure before having unsupervised access to cadets."

"It is important to emphasise that the police enquiries are of an historical nature and relate to individuals rather than activities at the Sea Cadet unit."

"Safe training is continuing to take place very successfully under the current management at the unit, which is thriving and has recently been presented with a number of national and Area trophies."

Praise for TS Laforey

AN East Anglian unit has won praise at its biannual inspection for its all-round efforts.

Northampton and Wellingborough was described by Inspecting Officer Cdr Clive Smith as "literally bursting at the seams with cadets, and the dedicated supporters and staff work harmoniously to ensure the young people of Northampton and Wellingborough experience the very best of what the Sea Cadets has to offer."

Flipside of annual review



● Junior cadets from Hornchurch and Upminster display their decorated pancakes – alongside that of London Area Officer Cdr Paul Haines (on table)

THE new Area Officer for London, Cdr Paul Haines, visited the Hornchurch and Upminster Unit to carry out the units' Annual Review.

Cdr Haines was escorted by Acting CPO (SCC) Sarah Butcher, the new Officer in Charge of the unit – Sarah took over at the beginning of the year from Lt Cdr (SCC) Michael Chittock RNR, who has moved on to be Assistant District Officer for Essex District.

The commander was shown the various cadet classes taking place and saw cadets at work on their different subjects.

He was also given a comprehensive tour of the unit and its surrounding areas.

Cdr Haines was suitably impressed with what he saw, which further endorsed the unit as the 2007 winners of the Stephenson Trophy for the best unit within London Area.

Being Shrove Tuesday the Junior Cadets were busy decorating pancakes.

On the night the commander joined in the fun and decorated his own pancake.

A tale of two Bulwarks

AFTER years of following HMS Bulwark from design through to service, her namesake unit visited her for the first time while the ship was in Liverpool.

Suitable awed by the assault ship's size, the Buxton cadets were met by S/Lts Tom Horne and Jack

Bright, who took them on a guided tour from the cavernous dock through the ops room – which is bigger than TS Bulwark's main deck – to the bridge.

There was also a chance to examine the Goalkeeper point defence system before the cadets headed home.



Don't fear the Reeperbahn

AS SAILORS go, if not unique then David Franklin is in pretty rare company.

A Jewish emigré who fled Nazi persecution, his career was eclectic to say the least: clothing salesman, sailor, diver, photographer, importer, businessman, journalist.

A decade ago, the former sailor drew on his Service experiences – and a brief spell as a fashion photographer – to write a novel set in Malta.

Now he has put pen to paper again to encapsulate his life in **Dave's Tales** (Book Guild, £14.99 ISBN 978-1-84624-193-2), a mix of memoir and anecdotes... so the title's quite apt.

The heart of the book is devoted to the author's naval career, painting an image of an almost halcyon age of life for the lower decks in the early post-war era.

Yes, there are hoary chiefs and petty officers bellowing at the lads, but there are also kindly senior ratings too.

And there are runs ashore. Lots of runs ashore.

Shipmates may have been a bit wary of Franklin initially – "e speaks foreign," one bluntly put it – but 'speaking foreign' proved rather useful in Hamburg.

The Hanseatic port had a legendary – or infamous – reputation in the 50s and 60s.

The sailors guzzled the less-than-tastefully named wine *Kraner Nacktarsch* (Kraner's naked arse) then headed off to St Pauli's, Hamburg's red-light district to the *Große Freiheit* (Great freedom) nightclub. "The blurb said it was the 'heart of St Pauli'," writes the author, "I would have thought it was a bit lower down."

Booze and sexual liberation are a common theme in Franklin's memoirs – and the tour of northern Europe in the early 50s with three minehunters was liberally peppered with both. (This is definitely a book for the broad-minded.)

Copenhagen proved to be almost as debauched as Hamburg. There was copious

booze (again) provided by the good folk of Carlsberg and copious amounts of pornography; the Danes seemed to be ahead of the game when it came to pictures of naked men and women... pictures which promptly did the rounds in the mess decks.

All this will no doubt bring back fond memories (ones probably best not repeatable to the 'other half') for many National Servicemen and post-war matelots, as it's a good romp.

But there's a poignant, rather touching side to *Dave's Tales* too: his life before moving to Britain.

David Fraenkel, as he was then, was born in Berlin in 1924 to a Jewish family. His father served the Fatherland with distinction in the Great War – at dinner parties at the Fraenkel home he proudly displayed six Iron Crosses, earned for bravery in the line of fire.

That did not stop the Gestapo whisking him away one day in 1936 – an action which spurred the Fraenkels to emigrate to England the following year.

Yet England did not always look kindly upon the influx of asylum seekers and emigrés from the Third Reich. With invasion threatening Britain in 1940, David Fraenkel was branded an 'enemy alien', faced a curfew between the hours of midnight and 6am, and almost faced losing his bicycle.

He kept it thanks to the intervention of his kindly headmaster. "I cannot imagine that any harm to this country would be caused by Fraenkel having a cycle while at school," the teacher successfully pleaded.

He was right. David Fraenkel became David Franklin and served his adopted country.

Perhaps he was destined to go to sea: his first memory is wearing navy shorts, a navy jacket and navy cap in front of a Berlin café aged three.

The tally on the cap, however, read *Kriegsmarine*, not HMS...

A contemporary – and not especially accurate – illustration of Danish prisoners of war held in a prison hulk at Chatham



The incarceration game

CLIVE Lloyd's remarkable book of over 380 large-format pages, densely packed with readable prose and fine illustrations – **A History of Napoleonic and American Prisoners of War, 1756-1816: Hulk, Depot and Parole** (Antique Collectors' Club, £35 ISBN 978-1851495283) – is the result of the author's passionate interest of over 50 years.

After serving in the Navy in World War 2, Clive Lloyd returned to civilian life as a designer, and also opened a gallery of marine paintings, writes Roger Knight, Professor of Naval History at the University of Greenwich.

In the 1950s he found a bone prisoner-of-war model in the Portobello Road market and thereafter he was hooked.

He formed a remarkable collection of prints, paintings and printed journals relating to those prisoners in England and it was collecting that drove this history from the opening of the Seven Years War in 1756 until Napoleon was finally defeated in 1815.

Lloyd writes this very much from the point of view of the

prisoners, detailing the way in which prisoner society evolved, some rich prisoners ('Les Lords'), and some who lost all through gambling ('Les Romans' or 'Les Miserables'), picking over offal heaps for food.

Although food and monetary support were provided by the British, clothes were the responsibility of the home nation, and the authorities allowed both internal markets and clothes to be sold to the British public.

Relations between prisoners and British officials varied widely between locations. There were many conventions now not known to us, with officer's eligible for parole, free to roam within agreed limits and socialise in many English towns.

Lloyd has scoured the literature of France, Denmark and America for published reminiscences, particularly of escapes.

Perhaps the most charming concerns 30 French soldiers involved in the bungled landing at Fishguard in 1797, when they surrendered to local forces commanded by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Cawdor.

They showed more initiative in getting home than they had in achieving their military objective.

Aided by two Welsh women, both in love with Frenchmen, they made away with Lord Cawdor's yacht to France. During the brief Peace of Amiens one of the couples returned to open a pub in Methyr Tydfil, only to beat a retreat back to France when war was once declared again.

It is, however, the war against Napoleon when the story becomes fascinating, by which time the number of French, Danish and American prisoners grew to over 122,000 at its peak.

By this time the hulks at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham were overcrowded and often diseased, though conditions were better ashore at Portchester Castle, Forton and Mill Bay.

There were other depots at Bristol and Liverpool. Norman Cross, on the Great North Road, was built of wood in four months, and eventually contained six thousand prisoners. The depots spread up to Edinburgh Castle, at Penicuik and Perth. Dartmoor, finished in 1809, described by the Governor as "an overcrowded city without women," was a lethal place, and 1,198 prisoners were to die there.

The situation got worse after

the peace preliminaries had been signed in 1814, with frustrated prisoners still behind bars.

As late as April 1815 the Somerset Militia lost control of angry American prisoners at Dartmoor, resulting in a riot and the deaths of 63 prisoners, in what became known as the Dartmoor Massacre. Over 5,000 Americans were eventually sent home. Of all nationalities, over 10,000 prisoners died between 1803 and 1814.

If you are looking for tightly-argued historical logic, tables of statistics, appendices of government costs, lists of the great civilian works which were carried out by the prisoners, you will be disappointed.

Overall judgements and conclusions are missing; nor, sadly, is the book anything more than scantily referenced, but this lack of finish may have been the result of the author's death in 2004.

What you have is a book packed with interest and anecdote, of tales of cruelty and early death, of bravery and loyalty, of the proud traditions of families today descended from prisoners who stayed in England and Scotland and married.

But above all, this book shows the underside of a conflict in which nations were fighting for survival, and nobody, after reading this book, will think that things are any worse today than they were two hundred years ago.

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'Let this be a lesson to you...'

SHORTLY after daybreak on Tuesday July 4 1944, the minesweeping trawler HMS Hoxa spied a dinghy in the Indian Ocean some 700 miles south of Ceylon.

Seven men clung to it. Another 16 hung on to rafts and wreckage of the liberty ship Jean Nicolet. Of the 100 men who had sailed the merchant vessel, they were all who survived her attack by the submarine I8.

The horrors of escaping a sinking ship, of spending 36 hours in the Indian Ocean with no food or water, with sharks picking off the dead and living, paled when RN intelligence officer Lt Cdr L A Steward questioned the survivors.

Seward knew of I8's reputation – and especially that of her captain, Cdr Tatsunosuka Ariizumi, a man already dubbed 'The Butcher' by naval intelligence.

Even by his standards, however, The Butcher had excelled himself on the night of July 2.

The crew of the Jean Nicolet abandoned ship and took to their boats after two torpedoes crashed into the vessel.

As the lifeboats rolled and rocked in the ocean, I8 surfaced. Her crew lined her deck. A voice in English urged the survivors to swim to the safety of the submarine.

A 17-year-old steward was the first to take up their offer. He was beaten with a pipe before a submariner emptied a revolver into his head and kicked his body over the side. A second man was bayoneted before his skull was smashed in with a rifle butt.

The atrocities did not end there. Ariizumi set about rounding up the lifeboats and boats. The survivors were frogmarched on to I8's hull, robbed of most worldly goods, beaten, slapped, their hands bound behind their backs.

"Let this be a lesson to you that Americans are weak," Ariizumi snarled. "You must realise that Japan will rule the world."

To demonstrate Japanese mastery, the submariners then formed two lines on the aft deck of I8 and forced the prisoners to 'run the gauntlet'.

As the unfortunate Americans struggled between the lines they were bitten by bars and butts, slashed at with knives or bruised by pieces of chain.

And at the very end of the gauntlet stood a large submariner with rifle and bayonet, ready to put the prisoner out of his misery and pitchfork him over the side.

Of 60 men forced to run the gauntlet, only three survived. The remaining 30 or so survivors were spared only by the approach of an Allied aircraft which forced I8 to dive.

The prisoners were left on deck as the submarine vanished beneath them. It would be a good 30 hours before Hoxa found them.

Books on the fate of Allied prisoners at the hands of their Japanese captors are legion.

Cruelty, however, was not solely the preserve of the Japanese soldier, as Dr Mark Felton demonstrates in **Slaughter at Sea: The Story of Japan's Naval War Crimes** (Pen & Sword, £19.99 ISBN 978-184415-6474) and the Jean Nicolet was far from an isolated incident.

The author has plundered archives around the world as well as printed books and newspapers to remind us that the Imperial Japanese Navy was every bit as complicit in atrocities as the Army was.

It wasn't merely crimes at sea with which they bloodied their hands. Like Nazi doctors, IJN surgeons carried out repeated medical 'experiments' – needless amputations, needless dissections – before the poor victims were strangled with rope and their bodies buried in unmarked graves.

This is a very dark story – and one worth remembering. For while in the aftermath of World War 2 stories of atrocities abounded – and justice caught up with some of



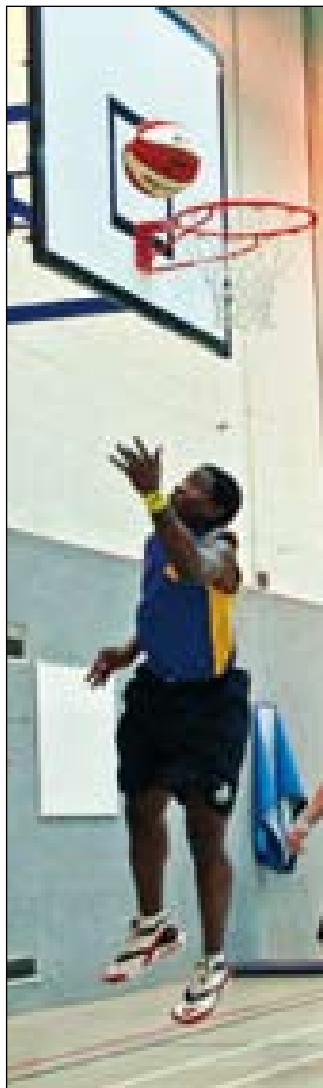
Shame and dishonour... Japanese prisoners with bowed heads after hearing Hirohito announce his nation's unconditional surrender

Picture: US National Archives

the perpetrators at various war crimes trials – six decades on, these crimes at sea are at best overlooked and forgotten, at worst denied.

It would be nice to report that justice caught up with the perpetrators. It did not in many cases: 137 naval officers were tried and 129 convicted of war crimes.

Tatsunosuka Ariizumi was not among them. Rather than surrender, Ariizumi shot himself in his cabin. His comrades wrapped his body in the Imperial flag and tossed it into the ocean, a death becoming a hero...



Hooperstar... ET(ME) Justin Campbell scores during the demolition of the Winchester Wizards

Warming up for the big ones

MORALE-boosting results at HMS Collingwood saw both senior and junior RN basketball sides provide more evidence of growing confidence which can only be achieved through victories against quality opposition.

Following a three-hour 'blowing off of the cobwebs' session on Friday night, an early Saturday morning match against Winchester Wizards saw the RNMBA side struggle initially to get into their stride, *writes Cdr Rob Knill, chairman RN Basketball.*

When they did, however, they produced some of the most fluent basketball seen in recent years, eventually rolling out 84-46 winners.

LET(ME) Blair Charles, and ET(ME)'s Myron and Justin Campbell (all HMS Sultan) and Mne James Woodcock (RN Poole) were all on song.

The return of Mne Mike Stubbs (CTCRM) and discovery of Mne 'Oz' L'Abbatte (FPGRM) also showed increased depth in the playmaking area.

The development squad then snuck a narrow win against a well-established Portsmouth Command team (57-55) before going almost as narrowly in a follow-on fixture against Winchester, 59-62.

LMEA 'Jack' Paxton (HMS Kent) and Mne Dale Solf (Cdo Logs Regt) made significant contributions, as did ET(ME) Ben Whitaker.

A further two hard-fought games on Sunday saw the development squad lose a highly-charged encounter with Whiteleigh Wolves by just three points (64-67) and the seniors – now wilting as a result of such an intense series of matches – go down 80-89 to a highly talented Solent Smugglers national league Div 4 outfit.

Overall, it was a hugely beneficial 'workout weekend'.

The squad now moves to HMS Drake for pre-Inter Service training camp (April 6-12) and the Inter Services tournament proper at Grantham (April 18-20) with much of the blood, sweat and tears already behind them this year.

More details from Cdr Knill on 94391 7641.

Closing the gap

The row to glory

TEMERAIRE was the venue for the 2008 Inter Services squash championships, *writes Lt Cdr David Cooke, secretary RNSRA.*

Preceding the Championships, an inaugural Combined Services U25 fixture had been arranged by Sgt 'Westy' West RM (RN squash U25 manager) against Portsmouth Grammar School.

Although the pick of the Services U25 players were involved, they were no match for a PGS side that bore little resemblance to grammar school boys. The result, a 0-6 defeat, was a foregone conclusion.

On the first day, the RN U25s opened proceedings with their match against the RAF but without their number one string OM Richard Rowley (HMS Middleton).

In his place, AET Stephen Wallace (Sultan) played very well against a tough opponent, but a lack of match fitness proved too much for the Navy player who had to concede defeat after an 8-10 result in the third game.

Mne Martin Sadler (42 Cdo RM) at number two won comfortably, but the remainder of the team each went down 0-3.

The RN veterans playing against an ever-youthful Army veterans team never got a look in, except Lt Cdr Robin Young (Nelson) playing in an unfamiliar number two slot, who disposed of his opponent in three straight games.

A strong RN senior team looked to stand more chance of an upset this year than for a number of years and when the Navy champion Capt Damien May RM (771 NAS) beat his RAF opposite number – the current Combined Services individual runner-up – an upset really was on the cards.

Lt Jules Crew (815 NAS) narrowly failed to beat his opponent in five games and Lt Matt Ellicott (HMS Westminster) and POAEA Neil Martin (815 NAS) both had good tussles in four games, but without success.

The RN Ladies fielded the



42 Cdo's Mne Martin Sadler (foreground) and AET Stephen Wallace (Sultan), RN U25 squad members, warming up for their clash with the Army at Temeraire

Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams

strongest team possible too, yet were no match for an experienced Army side who brushed the dark blues aside apart from Cdr Fiona Fawcett (Beaconsfield) who pulled a leg muscle early in her match but still managed to extend her opponent to five games.

On the second day, all four RN teams were in action. In the U25 section, Wallace took his Army opponent and current CS individual under 25 champion, to five games, but match fitness was again his undoing.

The remainder of the U25s never got a look in and were eventually defeated 0-5.

A slightly re-arranged RN

veterans side were next on against last year's champions, the RAF, and encountered a very confident Air Force team that included a player recently moved up from their senior squad.

The Navy were no match and were beaten comfortably 0-5, no RN player ever seriously threatening.

Because of unavailability and the previous day's injury to Fawcett, the RN ladies were always on the back foot and were outclassed by the RAF ladies, who fielded a team that looked very similar to the one that won the title in 2007.

The final section of the day brought on the eagerly awaited

arrival of the Army number one and ex-world ranker, to play against Navy number one Damien May.

Although May had lost convincingly in 2007 he was in a buoyant and confident mood.

May won the first game and, to the surprise of many, the second too, but he lost the next two and the score was even.

Half way through the final game both were level on points and a major upset was certainly possible, but for all May's best efforts he was unable to match the skill of his opponent and finally succumbed 2-3.

Three of the other RN senior players took their Army counterparts to four games, with Crew winning his encounter 3-1.

The final morning started with the RAF vs Army U25 contest, which provided five game encounters in four of the matches.

Although all four matches were very close, the Army finally came out on top and took the trophy 4-1.

Next on court was the veterans' final, where once again the RAF were too strong for the Army and edged home 3-2.

In the ladies' competition there was a repeat of the 2007 final where the RAF, current champions, once again managed to fend off the Army to take the title 4-1.

The final series of matches brought together the Army and RAF seniors, with the result in the balance throughout the match.

The Army won at numbers one and three, the RAF had matches four and five in the bag and all hinged on the outcome of the number two seeds, which was eventually won by Capt G Clarke (Army), ensuring victory for the soldiers 3-2.

Over the three days, there was much top quality squash in evidence and although the Senior Service did not come away with any trophies, scores and results in many matches did not reflect just how much the RN players have closed the gap on the other two Services.

Tour launches crucial year

THE Navy's cricket team staged a season-shaping tour of South Africa's cricketing heartland ahead of their biggest year on record.

2008 will see the centenary Army vs RN match at Lords, the razzle and dazzle of the Inter Services Twenty20 tournament and the campaign to regain the Inter Services trophy which the sailors last lifted in 2000, *writes Lt Andrew Ainsley, HMS Severn.*

The team last visited South Africa in 1997, not long after the end of apartheid, and in the interim they have also toured India (2000), Australia (2001) and a rain-soaked Barbados in 2004.

For the small group of 13 players this was to be a tough challenge with seven games in 11 days as well as coming to grips with the peculiarities of touring for a relatively inexperienced party.

Training had been on-going since November but nobody could predict just how the small group of players would fare in the scorching heat of one of the world's most forward-looking cricketing nations.

The tour opener against the South African Navy did not prove to be the test that had been expected and the opening partnership of Sgt Shaun Needham (Cdo Logs) (86) and debutant ET Harry Young (MWS) put the opposition bowling to the sword with RN captain, Lt Cdr Paul Snelling (DE&S) leading the late contributors.

The RN bowling attack took heart from the batsmen's performance and had little trouble in knocking over the SAN batting line-up, with Mne Ash Haw (42 Cdo) taking 3-13, to record an opening match victory and bragging rights.

There were tougher challenges ahead: the next match threw the Navy into the lion's den against premier league club Western Province CC.

The decision to bowl first with temperatures reaching 32 degrees had the RN on the back foot from early on.

Despite playing on the quickest pitch they had bowled on for many a year the Navy bowlers failed to make in-roads into a powerful Western Province batting card and faced a daunting 249-run chase which proved too much as the

sailors crumbled to 55 all out, coming back down to earth with a dull thud.

The arrival of the RN's most experienced player Cdr Chris Slocombe (DE&S) could only strengthen the bowling and so it proved as the next opposition of Cape Town CC were restricted to what was believed to be an attainable target.

The RN middle order ground to a halt in the face of restrictive home bowling and left the late order no chance of reaching victory.

The middle weekend of the tour had always been targeted as an opportunity to secure some positive results as the team bus headed away from central Cape Town to Stellenbosch and then Constantia.

Team aspirations were not to be disappointed. Playing the Scorpions CC beside a wine-bottling facility, the RN won the toss and elected to bat and set a large total of 243-8 on the back of a maiden RN century for Mne Cullum Smith (45 Cdo) and a supporting 50 from skipper Snelling.

Bowling on the back of such a solid batting performance the Senior Service were always in control, with Ash Haw again bagging three wickets, and secured victory with overs in hand.

The Constantia Oval hosted the next day's game against the Western Province Academy and the picturesque setting will remain with the tour party as long as the incredible result will.

The prospective first-class cricketers were out to secure professional contracts and their bowling highlighted this as the sailors were unable to see out their allocation of overs and posted what looked a below-par score despite a confident 37 from ET(WE) Harry Young (MWS).

Nobody had foreseen what was to follow. A fine opening spell by Lt Jonathan Parker (DCSA) and Ash Haw, who finished with 3-33, took four early wickets and when wicket keeper Lt Andrew Ainsley grabbed two quick catches standing up to the stumps the sailors sensed blood. With the scores level it fell to LMA Gareth Freeman (Portsmouth NHS) to take the final wicket and leave the game as a tie.

The final cricketing push saw matches against Groot Drakenstein GC and a second

meeting with the Academy players, this time in the guise of a Western Province U19s.

The Groot Drakenstein ground, in the middle of the wine lands, boasts the first grass wicket laid in South Africa but sadly a thunderstorm precluded this from being used and instead an artificial wicket was laid which all the bowlers struggled to come to terms with.

The Groot Drakenstein club is steeped in history and the pavilion was a shrine to the greats of the old game.

Local custom saw the visitors bat first so as not to be unduly affected by the midday sun but was balanced by having to drink a between-innings toast to the hosts.

Despite runs from Snelling, Mne Alvin Pollard (CTCRM), Ainsley and Parker the target never looked enough and was chased down in quick time.

Could the players raise their game just one more time and see off the Academy players to finish the tour on a high?

Winning the toss and batting on a damp track the sailors were always fighting with their backs to the wall but runs once more from Smith, Ainsley, Parker and a quickfire knock by ET Marlon Crichton (Sutherland) gave a glimpse of hope.

This was quickly extinguished as attacking batting and a handful of dropped catches gave the U19 side an easy victory and produced a final tour reckoning of played seven, won two, lost four, tied one.

The record books may not show this to have been a successful tour but as so often pure statistics do not tell the true story. The squad is certainly stronger as a group and more than ready to face the challenges of the 2008 season.

In terms of individuals, Smith and Young look to have long careers ahead of them, the middle order has shown depth, fight and flair, Haw seems to be developing as an all-rounder and the opening attack of Parker and Adams, when fit, bowl with genuine pace and fire.

TICKETS for the Army-Navy encounter at Lords on Tuesday July 29 are now available: adults £10, children and OAPs £5. Details from Lt Cdr David Cooke 02392 723741 or rns04@a.dii.mod.uk

FLAGSHIP HMS Illustrious rowed to glory in the Armed Forces winter league with a range of medals that have just been announced.

The league consists of five rounds stretched between October and February, with teams of four and eight covering distances ranging from 2,000m to 16,000m.

The carrier competed in three categories: men's open VIII, ladies' open IV and men's over 35 IV (the average age of the latter team was 42 with one entrant, WO 'Brum' Endall, being a sprightly 47).

The men's open VIII took silver in the Armed Forces challenge and also achieved silver in the whole league, the ladies took gold and silver, and the 'mature men' took a thoroughly-deserved gold in the challenge and silver in the whole league.

"The reason we entered this was as a result of the sports day we held on board against the USMC last year," explained Brum.

"When we beat them in the rowing, we had a pretty good team that was ready for another challenge... which turned out to be this competition. And what fun it was!"

More fun was provided by the return of an old favourite: *It's a Knockout.*

After a busy ship's programme, the PT staff decided to use the no-fly day to get the ship's company together for some 'fun in the sun'.

The event involved 17 teams of ten, who entered in various forms of fancy dress.

There were ten 'disciplines' to complete, including 'knock the EWO off the slippery pole', 'flipper dribble', 'fill your boots' and 'colander relay', all of which involved a good quantity of water.

Eventually the fun and games came to an end as the sun began to slip over the horizon with the overall winners being the AED team.



Going logo... WO Pete Berrow (captain RN squash) and Cdr Steve Shaw (chairman RN squash) model branded shirts as part of a trial by the RNSRA.

The association is trying out long and short-sleeve shirts and hopes that other RN sports associations will adopt this initiative, funding for which will be supplied by HMS Temeraire.

Representatives from associations and clubs interested in this corporate wear should contact Lt Cdr David Cooke (9380 23741 or rns04@a.dii.mod.uk) for further details.

Run in the sun

THE Army is inviting RN and RM teams to take part in an exhausting day-long endurance race next month.

2 Signal Regiment is hosting Race The Sun, a 15-leg competition, spread across 200km of North Yorkshire.

The May 15 race comprises running, paddling, cycling, cross-country, forced march, a half-marathon, mountain biking, a fell run, orienteering, swimming and finally a 3km stretcher race.

Each team can enter up to two competitors per leg – the fastest time counts. A team member can compete in more than one leg, but cannot repeat the same discipline. The stretcher race requires a six-strong team.

Details from Capt Shaun Wilson on 94777 5899.



CPO 'Bomber' Mills grapples with his opponent in the wrestling discipline under the watchful eye of the referee

Caber intensive

THERE are some mighty tossers aboard HMS Campbeltown.

They're also not bad at tug-of-war, truck pulling, and traditional wrestling as the frigate's ship's company learned in Bahrain at a rather unusual sports day.

Campbeltown was invited to take part in the **Gaelic Games** – a sort of Highland Games but in the sand and dust of the Gulf rather than amid the glens and peaks of Scotland.

'Clan Campbeltown' were placed third after demonstrating their prowess in tossing the caber, shot putt, tug-of-war, wrestling, and hauling trucks – the latter two events proved particularly popular (and demanding). "I'm going to struggle when I get back on board, I can feel the aches and pains already but it has been a fantastic day," enthused CPO(ET(ME)) 'Bomber' Mills.

The ship's most senior rating, Executive Warrant Officer Jim Mustard, said the games had proved a good morale booster and a welcome change from the more typical games of rugby and football.

"It's been a great day, hard work but lots of fun and great to do something different," he added.

The sailors celebrated their third place in traditional style: a barbecue and a few cold beers.



Two climbers struggle up the imposing slopes of Makalu

'One of the hardest propositions of all'

AFTER four years of planning, they're off.

While fellow Britons were heading to church on Easter Sunday or perhaps enjoying a lazy day, 42 Service personnel, drawn from all arms of the Forces, headed to Nepal to grapple with one of the most demanding mountains on the planet: Makalu.

Fewer than 250 people have made the summit of the Himalayan peak since it was first scaled in 1955 (the same number climb Everest every year) and just two have reached it via the perilous south-east ridge. The late Sir Edmund Hillary branded the mountain: "One of the hardest propositions of all."

The 2008 military expedition is attempting a world-first traverse of Makalu, although there are four separate strands to the assault on the mountain. A main team will attempt the summit; a subsidiary main team will back up the leaders; a high-altitude development team will aim to stretch potential future main team members; and a junior team is taking on a safer but

nonetheless demanding goal – the highest trekking hill in the Himalayas.

More than 170 personnel from the three Services applied to take part, 80 were selected for a series of training sessions and camps, and just 42 were selected for the final four teams.

By the time you read this, the team should be establishing their base camp and getting accustomed to extreme altitudes, before beginning the attempt on the summit which rises 7,800m (26,000ft) above the earth.

The most demanding part of the climb will be overcoming a four-mile knife-edge ridge, known as the Black Gendarme, in bitter cold and howling winds.

"It's like scaling the Rock of Gibraltar with high altitude boots on, thick mittens, and about half the oxygen. It's pretty full-on," said expedition leader Sqn Ldr David Tait.

You can learn more about the expedition and its members at www.makalu2008.org



The RN challenge for the ball against the Army during the 1-1 draw at Aldershot

Picture: Graeme Main, Soldier Magazine



CONGRATULATIONS to the Royal Air Force who are the Seniors Inter Service champions for 2008 – thanks to a victory on RN home soil.

This year's contest opened with the RN and Army clashing at the ground of Blue Square Premier's Aldershot Town.

The Army took the lead on 20 minutes, but ten minutes later the RN equalised through POET (WE) Phil Archbold (HMS Collingwood), who was our best player on the night.

So it stayed until the final score, marking a good Navy performance and extending their unbeaten run to eight matches.

A week later, the RAF beat the Army 3-0 – and by all accounts they played really well and thoroughly deserved the emphatic win.

That left the airmen against the sailors as the decider, with the RN needing to win.

The match had to be moved from Fratton Park as Pompey were directed to play a league match so a couple of hundred of us gathered at Burnaby Road in quiet expectation.

Unfortunately our boys were completely outplayed on the night and the RAF ran out deserved 2-0 winners, with goals in either half.

The first, on 20 minutes, was an absolute screamer from outside the box, following good link-up play down the left wing.

The Navy were disappointed that they hadn't given a good performance, and to be honest they never looked like scoring.

All in all though, it has been a good season (won five, drew two, lost two) for this squad that is still



Onside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

improving under the management of WO Ian Binks and Capt Steve Marr RM.

With the emergence of quality youngsters, thanks to the good work being done at youth level, we all hope we can get our hands on that Inter Services cup soon.

RN Seniors 3 Cornwall 3 (South West Counties Cup).

This was an impressive fight-back for the RN, who were punished for some mistakes in the first hour of the match and were 3-0 down with twenty minutes to go.

But two goals from towering centre back AET Tom Ardley (HMS Heron) and a late equaliser from ET(ME) Danny Kerr (our best player on the day) was enough to give us a creditable draw.

Cpl Lee Farrell (CTCRM) also played really well and deserves mention.

If Devon beat Cornwall in the last game to be played (after *Navy News* went to press), then the Navy will have won the cup, otherwise we will be runners-up.

RN U23s 1 London University 1

On a bright afternoon in Fulham the RN U23s played their final warm-up game before the Inter Services.

With LMA Keating (HMS Drake) and MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) making their full debuts, the RN side started brightly, playing at a high tempo and creating regular chances from OM

McEvoy (HMS Collingwood) and WEA O'Neil which the home goalkeeper did well to keep out.

On 22 minutes Mne Rule (RM Poole) drove forward and smashed a shot from 30 yards that thumped against the crossbar and bounced out to MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) who headed the rebound against the post before WEA O'Neil (HMS Collingwood) drove the ball high into the net.

The Navy side continued to push forward and only an acrobatic save from the University keeper from an ET(WE) Farnsworth shot kept the score down to 1-0 at half time.

The second half started brightly but although the RN were continuing to create chances, they couldn't find the second goal.

WEA Ritchie (HMS Collingwood) missed a great opportunity from a corner when he found himself unmarked at the far post but headed wide.

With ten minutes left WEA Ritchie found himself isolated with the University striker in the RN goalmouth and conceded a penalty which the London striker duly dispatched past the RN keeper WEA Barker (HMS Collingwood).

The Navy continued to press for the winner and it almost came when, from a free kick, the ball was headed back across the goal for NA Card (HMS Ocean) to smash over the bar from four yards. MEM Kerr (HMS Exeter)

then hit a half volley from the edge of the area which the University again turned over the bar.

RN U23s 2 RAF 0

The Navy lads were in confident mood prior to their first Inter Service game v RAF away at Cosford.

After a frenetic opening, the RN began to impose themselves on the game, with both AET Brookes and OM McEvoy (HMS Collingwood) dictating the pace of the game from the centre of midfield.

MEM Davidson (HMS Lancaster) and WEA Ritchie (HMS Collingwood) were rocks at the heart of the defence.

After 17 minutes OM McEvoy played a slide-rule pass through for MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) to coolly finish.

The second half started slowly for us, as the RAF had the wind at their backs. They almost grabbed an equaliser within 15 seconds of the re-start were it not for the athleticism of MEM Keneally (HMS Bristol) who dived low to turn a shot on to the post.

This galvanised the Navy side and on 70 minutes an RN free kick from ET(WE) Farnsworth was curled in for WEA O'Neil (HMS Collingwood) to head our second goal.

Last month, we reported that free tickets were available to personnel based in the Portsmouth area for certain Pompey home games (the next one is the clash with Blackburn Rovers on April 26). Only Nelson-based personnel should contact their PTI staff. Sailors and marines based at Sultan and Collingwood should get in touch with their respective PTIs.

Sunseekers head to Dorset

SID Lawrence and his merry band of volunteers from the **RN Automobile Club** once again supported this year's Rallye Sunseeker held in Bournemouth.

In a case of *déjà vu*, the RN motoring buffs served as marshals on Post 15, situated in Ringwood South, making sure racers and spectators were safe.

Competitors raced past at roughly 60-second intervals during two stages, one in the morning, one in late afternoon.

During the morning stage Sid and his crew had to put their firefighting skills to good use when a Subaru Impreza caught fire between post 14 and 15 with a blown turbo; the connecting rod also decided it was going to exit the top of the engine.

The 2008 event saw the MG Metro 6R4 Owners' Club celebrating the 21st anniversary of the victory of Malcolm Wilson

and the late Nigel Harris on the Citroen Winter Rally Round 1 of the National Rally Championship. A generation later, the Rallye Sunseeker is the first-round race.

The MG buffs were in attendance in numbers; some 25 6R4s was the biggest gathering for some time and 16 gave demonstration runs around part of the Somerley House stage.

Again there was a good showing from competitors: 96 entrants competed over 70 miles of Dorset and Hampshire, with stages taking place in Bournemouth, Wareham, Uddens Forest, copses north and south of Ringwood, and within the grounds of Somerley House.

The weather was fine and dry with slight showers later in the day.

As for the RNAC enthusiasts, their morale was maintained all day long thanks to regular supplies of refreshments from Sid's kitchen.



Mud on the road... An Impreza WRC kicks up the dirt during the Rallye Sunseeker

Picture: PO 'Dutchy' Holland, Phoenix CBRN DC

Meet the soaring Igls



● **Head start... A RN competitor takes off down the track on the skeleton**
Pictures: Lt Cdr Graeme Stringer

THE 2008 winter season proved to be another successful time in the development of the RN skeleton bob team, writes PO(D) Sid Lawrence.

The 2008 Inter Service Championships were held at the Olympic Bobsleigh, Skeleton and Luge Track in Igls.

The RN once again entered a continually-improving team as the final results proved. Twelve of us made up the squad this season including myself as manager, coach and race official.

Before the Inter Service race we held the RN Championships, based on the fastest joint time over two runs, with the men and ladies in separate races.

The event also included a guest class open race to all other Service riders and all members of the RAF and Army Teams entered this event.

Results

Men: 1 LD Sean Dunstan (SDU1 Plymouth) – he also won the Admiral Stopford Arms, fastest speed plate and men's fastest single time of the race; 2 Mne Mathew Leach (Cdo Logs Regt) – also winner of the men's fastest start; 3 LMET Robert Pritchard-Jones (Drake)

Ladies: 1 Logs Becky Stevenson (Ocean) – also winner of the ladies' fastest single time; 2 Logs Sarah Rushton (Bulwark); 3 Logs Samantha Niel (Ocean) – also winner of the ladies' fastest start

Next up were the GB Skeleton Bobsleigh Championships. All members of the RN team entered and achieved some very good results against other competitors who have been competing throughout the season.

The results were made more impressive by the fact that all the Royal Navy competitors, with the

exception of three men, had only started the sport two weeks before the championships.

Results

Men: 13 LD Dunstan; 15 Mne Leach; 17 LMET Pritchard-Jones
Ladies: 9 Logs Stevenson; 13 Logs Rushton; 17 Logs Niel

The climax of the week was undoubtedly the Inter Service Championships.

A year's preparation and months of training in gyms and on running tracks by the athletes was going to prove worthwhile.

The Inter Service race, which was again based on the joint time of two runs using only the five fastest male riders with four counting and three fastest female riders.

This for me was the hardest part of the fortnight, because I had the unenviable job of selecting the final team from the previous two weeks' training knowing that some of the riders would feel disappointed.

On a warm and sunny day, we started the race.

After the first run with all its total disregard for personal safety, sheer determination and making use of the knowledge built up over the previous two weeks training on the track, the Navy riders were in second place for both male and female competitors.

Encouraged by the success of the first runs, all eight Navy riders then raced their hearts out in the second and final run and both teams maintained their second place standings.

The ladies team in particular did very well as they had only started sliding from the top of the track the previous week and had to work very hard to beat the much more experienced teams from the RAF and Army who had also been training and racing on various tracks during the season.

Logs Becky Stevenson claimed the 2008 individual Inter Service title with two outstanding runs; her success took the ladies team to second place and her fastest time was unbeaten by any other female competitor. She was also awarded the fastest novice trophy.

In all, considering the lack of experience of the RN riders, this race was a great success and throughout the fortnight all members of the team trained hard during the day, then worked late into the night preparing equipment, working on their sleds and runners.

As a team, they pulled together to ensure the future of RN skeleton is now fully set in motion.

Results

Men: 7 LD Dunstan; 9 Mne Leach; 11 LMET Pritchard-Jones
Ladies: 1 Logs Stevenson; 5 Logs Rushton; 7 Logs Niel

Plans are already under way for the forthcoming season starting with ice training camps, followed by the British Championships, RN Championships and ultimately the Inter Services of 2009.

We have now firmly established our place in this awesomely exciting sport and proved we are serious competitors.

This year will see Royal Navy team members training at the facilities in Bath University, including the specially built sprint start that replicates the top of a bobsleigh track, we are also entering summer sprint start competitions and taking part in Great Britain Team selections, hopefully a place in our national team will once again be filled by a Royal Navy athlete.

Anyone, male or female, who has a passion for speed, lycra, and lunacy, contact Sid on 9375 65454.

Sleighting all challengers

THE Mo Hammond Trophy is in Royal Navy hands for the third time in four years after an Inter Service bobsleigh triumph in Igls, Austria.

Formula 1 on ice has often been the best way to describe the sport of Bobsleigh, writes Lt Cdr Graeme Stringer (HMS Ocean).

At speeds of 70-90mph and experiencing 4-5g in some of the solid ice curves that are found at the Olympic bobsleigh tracks in Europe and North America, it is not a sport for slouches.

Training for the sport has also developed at pace and the Army have taken a lead in recent years with significant investment in both equipment and coaching staff.

Fortunately, a close working relationship established over the years has enabled up to a dozen RN/RM novices to attend Army training camps in Norway and Canada in recent years and the dividends have been obvious.

Events in Austria this year began with a single week of training for the less experienced bobsleighters and this was an opportunity to get used to a new track.

The pressure was going to be on for the RN this year as the Army had only recently held their championships on the same track and so had a head start.

Training went well with new drivers Lt Fiona Bell and POAH Nige Bickley (both from Ocean) quickly learning that the 1,220m track at Igls can bite like the best of them.

The weekend saw the arrival of the more experienced members of the team with captain Mne Lee Johnston fresh from the World Championship four-man race at Altenberg, Germany where he achieved a very creditable 13th position and Mne Shiner Wright who achieved 19th.

The championship week proper saw the pace of training runs increase threefold.

With all ice disciplines, both military and civilian, taking part and unseasonably high temperatures of 15-20° at the venue, tension was building with the Navy team rapidly proving to be favourites for the Inter Service event.

The middle of the week and race day one – the Inter Services are conducted in the same way as the World Championships with four two-man runs taking place over two days – saw the RN establish a substantial lead over the Army and the RAF.

A brief diversion after this race was the RN/RM participation in the ITV show *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway* with the RM members of the team taking the lead.

Mne Johnston drove the four-man bobsleigh for two celebrity crews for the Ant versus Dec portion of the show, the other crew members being the footballer Lee Sharp, former boy band singer Jason 'J' Brown, model Melinda Messenger and actress Bonnie Langford.

It was back to business on the second day.

Temperatures at the track dropped, but tensions rose with all to play for – and splits of hundredths of a second possibly deciding the outcome.

The strength in depth of the RN team came to the fore and an easy victory was obtained securing the Mo Hammond trophy for a record third year.

The RN/RM Championships were run coincidentally with the Inter

Service event and the team were privileged to have Lord Glentoran present trophies and colours; Lord Glentoran won a gold medal in the two-man bobsleigh at the 1964 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck and is the President of the British Bobsleigh Association.

The British Championships are traditionally the final race of the bobsleigh season and allow many entries from diverse privately-sponsored teams to the more professionally-funded teams which represent the UK on the world stage – more often than not predominantly Service teams.

A similar pattern emerged as in the Inter Services but this time with Royal Marine Sgt John Jackson winning the two-man race.

The four-man race was perhaps one of the closest in recent years and significantly was won by Mne Lee Johnston with his closest rival S/Sgt Sean Olsson coming a close second.

The significance of Sean's team was that he had almost completely recreated the bronze medal-winning Nagano Olympic crew of 1998 and some inspired driving saw him take the lead after the first of two runs.

Carrying an injury that had plagued him all season, Johnston had to dig deep to overcome the deficit of the first run and to eventually win with a combined time of 1m 46.72s compared with Olsson's time of 1m 46.79s.

All in all, the week proved very successful for the RN/RM bobsleigh team with the British and Inter Service Championship titles returned to dark blue ownership.

The Navy's luge team also took a giant step forward by entering a complete team – CPOAEA Dave Terry (CHF), Sgt Damian Leaver (Ocean), NA Taff Wilcox (Ocean) and NA Annie Edwards (Ocean, pictured left) – in the Inter Service Championships for the first time in many years.

The races were held on the final two days after ten days of rigorous training.

The team worked very hard and had some excellent start times off the ramp, experiencing only minor injuries, unlike the Army squad who sadly lost three athletes to serious injury.

The RAF were the worthy winners of the Inter Service competition with the Army second and the RN taking the wooden spoon.

The result, however, was immaterial as all RN lugers finished safely, having achieved speeds of up to 94kph (58mph) and some very satisfactory personal performances.

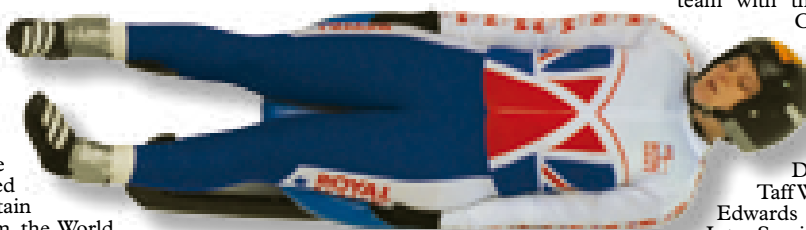
In particular, NA Annie Edwards who had only attended the Army ice camp in November as a novice, earned second place overall in the individual ladies race and became the RN ladies champion at the same time.

She excelled again a day later by coming runner-up in the British Championships (Ladies). Sgt Damian Leaver won the RN Championship having already won the Army Novice Championships in January.

The events of the past two months have clearly marked the arrival of RN Luge at this level and the aspiration is for the team to build on this season with a concerted recruitment effort during the summer.

The re-invigoration of luge in the RN has been a difficult process and would not have been possible without the support of the RN Bobsleigh management and the significant material support provided by Army Luge, for which S/Sgt Graham Holmes RLC was a major contributor.

If you think you have what it takes to represent your Service at luge, then contact CPO Dave Terry at Yeovilton on 93510 6980 to find out about ice camps later in the year.



On the Crest(a) of a wave

THE bell rings from the control tower; you take a final deep breath followed by a sprint start and dive on to your toboggan.

Suddenly, you are hurtling down a solid ice track through tight and steeply banking corners with only minimal control, at speeds of up to 80mph, with your nose only inches from the ice.

All too soon, you (hopefully) cross the finish line, with the rest of the world a barely-noticeable blur, the run has taken you less than a minute to travel the just-over-¾-mile-long track from top to bottom but; it passes in the blink of an eye.

Why on earth would you want to do that? Because it is brilliant that is why, writes Maj Jamie Summers RM, team captain.

This is a very simple description of the **Cresta Run** in St Moritz, Switzerland.

The run is unique, similar in some ways to bobsleigh or luge but with a bit more risk involved and tight lycra body suits are compulsory.

Riders tackle the run head first on toboggans that weigh around 40kg; the run itself requires not only an ability to control your own fear but also to master the toboggan you are riding – it will not make it down the very fast and tight corners on its own.

The Inter Service Cresta Championships are the culmination of careful preparation and training by all the team.

This year the Navy was in the unusual position of defending the Inter Services trophy, something that has not happened since the 1980s.

The team this year was made up of four bootnecks (who were all hoofing) and four matelots (cracking blokes).

Training went really well and all riders made good progress, although there were a few fallers along the way.

Special mention must go Capt Luke Kenny RM who rode exceptionally well in his novice season and fought his way into the team.

The squad also welcomed a visit from Brig Andy Salmon RM, who eagerly took up the challenge of riding the Cresta (the team hope he enjoyed it and that the broken ribs recover soon).

By the time race day approached, the much larger RAF team were considered hot favourites. We didn't think they were much 'cop' and knew when it mattered we would perform.

After the first few rides the RN team had set the pace and had effectively 'blown' the RAF away right from the outset.

Lt Cdr Angus Essenhigh clocked the fastest time of the day and won the individual event.

However, with a team of six riders and four counting over three courses, it wasn't over until our fourth man made it safely down the track.

That task fell to Sgt Ian Breeze, a Cresta legend but also prone to falling; if he fell the RAF would win.

Tension was mounting at the finish and the RAF team were overheard praying for Breezey to 'do one'.

Finally he came screaming into view in the prone position doing over 80mph and as he slowed to the finish a great grin appeared; we had done it again.

If you're interested in joining the Cresta team, contact Maj Summers on 93831 8733.

Next month



**Top bombing
part 1 –
a day with
HMS
Vengeance**



**Top bombing
part 2 –
the Naval
Strike Wing
return to sea**



**May the
Norse be
with you
– the art
of Viking
warfare**

Plus



**Birth of a
nation – the
Navy in the
Palestine
emergency
60 years on**



Lord's a-leaping



Sweet victory in the lion's den

YOU have to feel sorry for the French.

OK, actually you don't.

But losing on home turf twice in the space of 24 hours to their greatest rivals in rugby union must have been a bitter blow.

The second victory came courtesy – to a large extent – of the boot of Jonny Wilkinson.

The first, less-publicised triumph was no less sweet – and the home crowd no less hostile.

Twelve months ago, *Les Bleus* were toppled by a strong RN side in Portsmouth to lift the Babcock Challenge trophy.

This year, the fixture switched to Paris and the home of Stade Francais.

The right note was set from the outset, the French naval choir ensuring that an intimidating atmosphere was created as the final notes of *La Marseillaise* died away.

It was therefore perhaps no surprise that the Marine Nationale, playing in their traditional blue, were the stronger of the two sides in the early exchanges.

Their clever mix between hard forward-driving play and incisive lines from their back division ensured that the RN's defence was fully tested. However with 15 minutes gone, the only success for this early pressure was a sweetly-struck penalty.

Having weathered the early storm it was the turn of the British to exert pressure of their own, with the half-back pairing of 'Cowboy' John (Bulwark) and Rob Lloyd (42 Cdo) orchestrating the back play, forcing the French to show their mettle in defence.

However it wasn't long before the powerful running of the Navy's back three resulted in the first try for wing Josh Drauniniu (CTCRM) which was not converted.

Further pressure from the RN provided Rob Lloyd with the opportunity for an easy three points.

By now the Brits were playing with a

freedom and tempo that was a joy to watch.

Time and again they troubled the French by attacking from everywhere and keeping the ball alive and in hand even when under pressure.

Deft handling from the forwards ensured that the backs were often able to run at an unstructured defence and it was therefore no surprise when centre Callum McCrae (Cdo Logs Regt) picked a lovely, out-to-in angle to score a well-worked try close to the French posts. With the successful conversion from Lloyd, the RN were well placed at half time with a 15-3 lead and the local crowd largely silenced.

If the confident French crowd was quiet just before half time then the early play of the second half woke them up and reignited French hopes.

A lovely break down their right-hand 15m channel resulted in an excellent score wide out which unfortunately they couldn't convert.

The score was now 8-15, the crowd were cheering and singing for their beloved *Les Bleus* and the home team duly responded by raising the intensity of their game.

Further French pressure saw their forwards gaining just rewards for their efforts by driving over from short range to bring the scores even closer at 13-15.

The forward exchanges were such that the match referee, who was managing the game very well, decided that two of the front row needed some time for self reflection; a particularly fiercely-contested ruck had developed into a forwards' version of Entente Cordial.

With the momentum now fully with the French, the RN had to absorb sustained pressure on their own goal line.

Immense commitment from the pack ensured that the Royal Navy often had the nudge forward at a series of 5m scrums, whilst the second row pairing of Justin Doney (814 NAS) and Marsh Cormack (845 NAS) maintained an impressive work rate – an

outstanding performance given that these two players had only that week returned from deployment overseas.

Number 8 Matt Parker (CTCRM) merits special mention: he assumed the captaincy in the second half and his leadership was key in ensuring the RN's composure in the face of the French onslaught.

With the French storm blowing itself out, the Senior Service team showed that they were always awake to the opportunity of playing rugby with ball in hand.

In a rare foray into their opponent's half, they again busted the first line of defence and forced the penalty as the French tried in vain to slow down the play. Rob Lloyd landed the penalty to give the RN some breathing space as the clock ran down.

The final score of 18-13 meant that the Senior Service had become the first team to win away from home and successfully defend the trophy.

Though naturally jubilant with the victory, the Royal Navy team, through their President Admiral Neil Morissetti, acknowledged it had been a very close contest.

The match had been superbly staged by the French Navy and match co-sponsors Thales and Babcock.

Everyone agreed that this was comfortably the best match thus far in the series and that the Marine Nationale continued to make rapid progress with their rugby, both on and off the field.

The reasons why they were French military champions were evident for all to see and they will undoubtedly mount a very strong challenge when the teams next meet, provisionally scheduled for April next year.

The annual challenge has quickly matured into an event that is eagerly anticipated by both teams who, although they share so many values as sailors, marines and sportsmen, know that for the 80 minutes of the Babcock Challenge there is no Entente Cordial but plenty of healthy respect.

HEADING the field at Sandown, the 'Galloping Padre' makes history as the first naval chaplain to race in the Grand Military Cup.

Sadly, shortly after LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins took this photograph, the Galloping Padre – aka Father Simon Beveridge – was run out of the race by two loose horses as he continued to head the pack past the grandstand at the famous course.

But the Bish, based at RNAS Yeovilton, is unbowed – and has entered his name in the RN history books on his mount Feeling Better.

"It was going very well until I got taken out by two loose horses and run into the rails," he said.

"I've come off horses before, but not in that way. It's not uncommon, but it can happen.

"I was really looking forward to the race – it's something I've been working towards for several years.

"While I'm very disappointed, I'm pleased that I'm still in one piece."

The padre has already made racing history as the first minister of the church to win a point-to-point – he enjoyed a 50-1 victory at Wadebridge in December.

Simon, who's been a naval chaplain for 15 years, developed a taste for horse racing while serving at Lympstone when he was introduced to a course and began riding for a local trainer.

By 2005 he had progressed sufficiently to complete his Amateur National Hunt Jockey's course at Newmarket and apply for his Category A racing licence.

"I've been racing for just one season, but I'd like to race some more," Simon added.

"I'm a chaplain, not a jockey, but racing is something I like to do."

When not seeing to the spiritual needs of personnel at Yeovilton, the padre can be found practising most weekends at John Ryall's farm in Rimpleton.



100% NEW LIFESTYLE. NEW ZEALAND. NAVY

See page 43 for information on the exciting new opportunities available now.

‘An immortal deed’

The Zeebrugge Raid

ETERNAL WATCH

NOISES IN THE NIGHT

AN ENGLISH CRUISER!

IN THE dark of a biting-cold April night, figures clad in thick coats covered by a canvas cloak paced up and down the concrete and granite structure, occasionally pausing to stand at a parapet and stare at the waves crashing below.

The warm spring weather had given way to the return of winter. Rain fell incessantly. The bitter North Sea wind drove the damp cold down to the very bone.

There was no noise this night, save for the waters of the North Sea breaking against the pillars and granite of this great triumph of Man over Nature.

The Mole of Zeebrugge arched into the North Sea for more than a mile, a huge shield which protected a narrow lock and canal to the great city of Bruges.

The Mole was more than a mere breakwater, more than a mere pier. It was a marvel of Victorian/Edwardian engineering, 80 yards across at its widest point, carrying a road and rail line, goods sheds, cranes and derricks, a railway station.

To these peacetime features, the Germans had added at least half a dozen guns, bunkers, a flying boat base, barbed wire and machine guns.

It wasn't just the Mole which was a fortress. There was no coastline on earth better safeguarded by steel and concrete.

Along a 15-mile stretch of Belgium's shores, the *Marinekorps Flandern* stood watch with more than 225 guns – calibres ranging from small 3.5in to fearsome 15in. Fifteen batteries ringed Zeebrugge alone.

They protected the lair of the beast, the home of *Unterseebootsflotille Flandern*, the Flanders U-boat Flotilla. The beast was safe in his lair: huge concrete ‘pens’ protected these undersea monsters from the guns of the Grand Fleet and the bombs of the newly-formed Royal Air Force.

Even outside his lair, the beast seemed invulnerable. For every two merchant ships sunk in Atlantic waters by German submarines, at least one fell victim to boats of the Flanders Flotilla.

But the beast had an Achilles heel. His lair was eight miles from the sea. A canal bore him from his pen to open waters at Zeebrugge. Block the canal and the beast would be trapped.

It was too simple a plan for the ordinary German marine to comprehend. Rumours circulating the *Marinekorps Flandern* were far more grandiose, far more outlandish, far more believable.

“Over there, on the other side of the Channel, they're up to something,” the men convinced themselves.

“Tommy is readying a great fleet – hand-picked assault troops and landing forces, 20,000 men in all.”

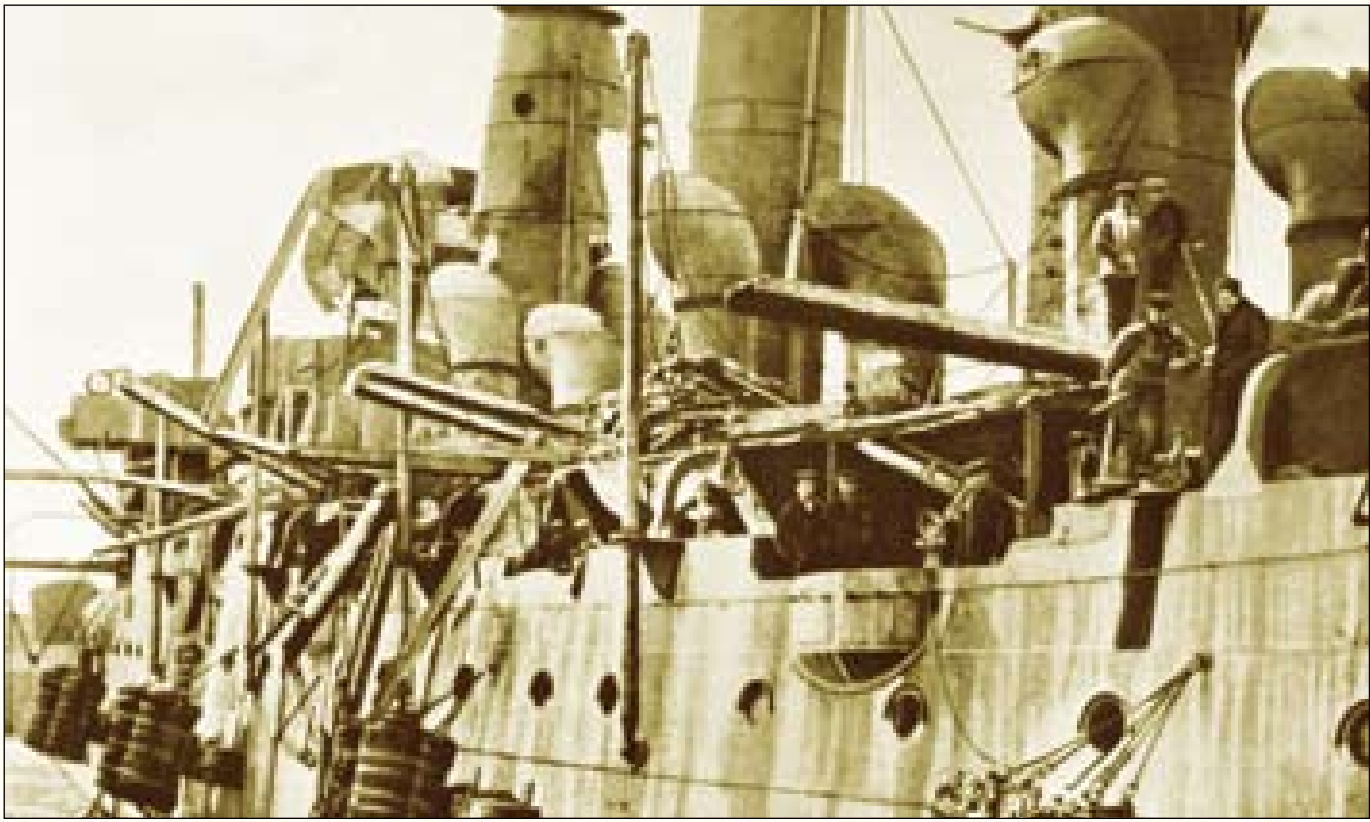
Tommy would roll up the Flanders coast from east and west, smoking out every bunker, battery and dugout with flamethrowers.

The men's leaders did nothing to dispel or quash such rumours. Warnings from above merely confirmed the marines' doubts: crews of coastal batteries shall die at their posts!

But when? Not tonight. No tonight was like every other night in Flanders. The luminous hands of the guards' wrist watches lethargically crept around.

“*Nichts Neue?*”

Nothing new? the guards asked each other as they passed routinely.



● ‘The one naval exploit of the war that moved and still moves the imagination of the nation...’ Blockships *Iphigenia* (nearest the camera), *Intrepid* and *Thetis* scuttled in the entrance to the Zeebrugge canal

“*Nein, nichts Neue.*”

It was now approaching 1am on Tuesday, April 23 1918 German time – a few minutes before midnight on Monday April 22 in Britain.

One German sentry seized another.

“Horch, didn't you hear anything.”

“There's a growling noise somewhere.”

It was difficult to distinguish anything above the crashing of the waves against the granite wall of the Mole.

But the rumble grew louder, a constant, rhythmic sound, a noise made by Man, not by Nature.

“That's the sound of an engine,” a guard yelled.

A star shell lit up the April night, slowly fading before being devoured by the grey-black heavens.

The sentries stared out across the Mole wall. The rain ran in small streams down their faces.

In the distance, somewhere over the horizon, a slight, brief flicker, then nothing.

Seconds later a huge fountain of earth was tossed up as a shell crashed into a meadow behind one of the 15 batteries ringing Zeebrugge.

“There! There! *Alarm! Alarm!*”

Bunkers and dugouts along the Mole emptied as the men of the *Marinekorps Flandern* rushed for their guns.

The men seized their binoculars and scoured the ocean, but all they could see was a billowing, surging mist which hid everything.

Flares raced into the heavens but did little more than give the mist a yellow-brown hue.

“Can you hear that?” one sentry asked. “The noise of engines. Utterly clear!”

Alarm!

In the signals bunker, a telegraphist hurriedly tapped out a curt message to headquarters: Z E E B R U G G E B E D R O H T. *Zeebrugge in danger.*

The batteries on the coast opened fire, hurling a curtain of steel into the mist. The guns on the Mole joined in.

The beams of lamps and searchlights danced in the April

night. Suddenly they caught a dark shadow, racing at full speed for the Mole.

Alarm! Ein englischer Kreuzer!

Thus began the first commando raid.

NEW MAN AT HELM

BRAWN NOT BRAINS

CORKING THE BOTTLE

The old year had just three days to run as Roger Keyes waited outside the office of the First Sea Lord in the Admiralty. 1917 had not been a good year for the Royal Navy. The U-boat menace had seriously undermined public confidence in the world's grandest navy. The submarine peril had cost the First Sea Lord his job. Lionised at the war's opening as a 20th-Century Nelson, John Rushworth Jellicoe had failed to deliver a modern-day Trafalgar and then failed to counter the German submarine. Jellicoe buckled. The war was all but lost, he had warned the Cabinet that summer.

Jellicoe's pessimism and an increasingly hostile popular press forced Lloyd George's hand. On the night before Christmas, the axe fell on the admiral. Into his shoes stepped Admiral Rosslyn ‘Rosy’ Wemyss, a rather affable, monocled chap. Wemyss was more courtier than sailor. He mixed in the right circles, he was a close friend of the king, he spoke fluent French, he could – and did – charm guests thanks to his talents as a raconteur.

Wemyss was not a master of the battlefield. He did not pretend to be. But he sought men who would re-invigorate the Navy, and Roger Keyes was just such a man.

Keyes was one of the Admiralty's young Turks. ‘Action’ was Roger Keyes' watchword. To every problem there was an offensive solution, the 45-year-old rear admiral reasoned as the Royal Navy's Director of Plans.

Keyes' gaze fell upon the Dover Patrol, the command which barred the famous strait to the foe. Except that it did not. Too many U-boats were slipping through the elaborate

defences established by Vice Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, Keyes argued. And too little was being done about the lair of the beast. Roger Keyes demanded action.

Bacon had dismissed a raid on Zeebrugge as dangerous and impossible which would achieve nothing more than posthumous medals for gallant young officers seeking immortal glory.

To Reginald Bacon, there was only one way to bottle up the Hun in his hideout – build an impregnable wall across the canal entrance at Zeebrugge... but the Hun would hardly afford their foe time for such a move.

Bacon was cool, rational, calculated. He possessed a brilliant mind. Keyes was everything that Bacon was not. He was dynamic, warm-hearted, enthusiastic, energetic. He was a man of deeds, not thoughts, a man determined to do “something striking and brilliant”.

Rosslyn Wemyss needed such men. He called Keyes in to his office. “Well, Roger, you have talked a hell of a lot about what ought to be done in the Dover area, and now you must go and do it,” Wemyss told the young admiral.

Keyes set about his task immediately. He turned night into day at Dover with elaborate series of searchlights, floodlights and pyrotechnics which illuminated the strait “from end to end as bright as Piccadilly”.

Every imaginable vessel was pressed into service, ploughing the waters between Dover and Calais. The concentrated barrage worked – to a point; U-boat losses rose, but not dramatically... and not dramatically enough for Roger Keyes.

There was an obvious solution: block Zeebrugge and Ostend. Reginald Bacon had dismissed the idea as sheer folly; “dumping down ships” would not bottle up either port.

Keyes and his staff disagreed. As February 1918 drew to a close, their plans were ready – and they were elaborate: an old cruiser, *Vindictive*, would charge the Mole and disgorge a 900-strong storming party; submarines packed with explosives

would smash into the railway viaduct which linked the Mole with the shore and blow it up, cutting off the defenders and preventing reinforcements arriving.

The attack on the Mole was elaborate, but it was also a diversion.

The Zeebrugge raid would rise or fall on whether the *Unterseebootsflotille Flandern* was corked in its bottle.

While fighting raged on the Mole, three blockships would charge around its tip, head for the canal entrance at full speed, then scuttle themselves.

It was a plan, Roger Keyes believed, which was redolent of success. But if it miscarried?

“If it fails, it will be better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all,” the admiral argued.

It would not fail, for Keyes would see to it that the preparations were elaborate.

Extra guns were crammed aboard the obsolete cruiser *Vindictive*: 11in and 7.5in howitzers, mortars, machine-guns in the foretop, plus a handful of pom-poms. The broadsides from this imposing arsenal would silence any foe on the Mole – but if a didn't, there was a wall of protective steel which grew around most of the upper deck.

An artificial wall of fog would hide her approach to the Mole. Ships in the attacking force were fitted with elaborate devices: powerful fans would blow a chemical – and rather pungent – concoction towards the shore, cloaking the force.

Of course, no kindly German would allow *Vindictive* to come alongside the Mole and none would certainly help her berth. The solution was ingenious. Two huge grappling hooks were fixed to derricks fore and aft. The derricks would swing out over the Mole wall, the hooks – “like gigantic fish hooks five feet long” – would lower and dig into the concrete structure, fixing *Vindictive* in place.

Eighteen boarding gangways barely two feet wide would then bridge the gap between the ship and the Mole. The assaulting troops would scurry across then climb down a 20ft parapet and attack their

allotted targets.

If the grappnels were inadequate, *Vindictive* had an ace up her sleeve; two Mersey ferries, *Iris* and *Daffodil*, were hastily requisitioned, the prefix ‘HMS’ added – plus grappling hooks, steel plate, guns and other military kit. Like *Vindictive*, the two boats were expected to deposit troops on to the Mole. But if all else failed, they could push the cruiser against the Mole to hold her in place.

Once the storming parties were ashore, they were certain to face a strong garrison of German naval infantry – the *Marinekorps Flandern* – and reinforcements would surely rush from the shore along the pier to bolster the defence. To stop them, Keyes proposed ramming two old submarines, C1 and C3, into the wooden and metal viaduct which linked the Mole with the mainland, then exploding the craft.

All this would provide sufficient distraction to occupy the defenders while the blockships rounded the tip of the Mole.

The cork in the Zeebrugge bottle came in the form of three obsolete cruisers with a combined age of more than 80 – *Thetis*, *Iphigenia* and *Intrepid*. The trio were expected to rush the narrow canal entrance then sink themselves at an angle, before their sailors abandoned ship and fled. Only single men could volunteer to crew these venerable vessels, Roger Keyes decreed. The war had created enough widows already without the need to offer more husbands for Death's ravenous appetite.

‘REAL DANGER’

‘A GOOD HAMMERING’

ELABORATE PREPARATIONS

Throughout February and March dockyard workers in the Garden of England prepared the assault ships for their dangerous charge. As they did, men who had put their names forward for an “undertaking of real danger” began to arrive at Chatham.

They found strange forms taking shape in the naval base. *Vindictive* bore little relation to the cruiser of old. A succession of narrow gangways were swung out along one side of the ship, held in place by a lattice of wires and chains, while the fighting top had turned into a steel dumpling. There were additional guns, demolition parties, flamethrowers. “Every mortal form of frightfulness” had been welded or fixed to the old hull, Surgeon G F Abercrombie observed.

There was no denying that *Vindictive* was ugly, Able Seaman W Wainwright conceded. “a veritable floating fortress, a death trap fitted with all the ingenious contrivances of war that the human brain could think of.

“We took unholy pride and a fiendish delight in her and if it were possible for men to love a ship, we loved her.”

To engineer Lt Cdr Ronald Boddie, *Vindictive* “looked more like a Christmas tree than a cruiser.” Boddie was assigned to the lead blockship, *HMS Thetis*.

If there was the whiff of death and glory about *Vindictive*, there was merely the whiff of death about the three antiquated cruisers picked to plug the canal entrance. The skeleton crews who volunteered for them were certainly disappointed; just days before they had served in the queens of the seas, the dreadnoughts of the Grand Fleet. Worse was to come. Leave was cancelled and they were told nothing of their mission. Unsurprisingly, they grumbled and grouched.

Most men did not yet know what

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'Magnificent and the soul of war'... (left) Royal Marines and bluejackets storm the Mole at Zeebrugge with HMS Vindictive alongside as depicted by a diorama at the Royal Marines Museum

■ Continued from page i
their “undertaking of real danger” would be. Only a select band had been informed of the mission, and Roger Keyes left them in no doubt as to its danger. The storming parties on the Mole would give the Hun “a good hammering”, he explained to officers assembled on March 2. Keyes was, Ronald Boddie remembered, “less sanguine” about the men in the blockships.

Two fates awaited them: death or a German prison camp, although “every endeavour,” the vice admiral assured them, would be made to rescue these volunteers. Any officer could drop out of the operation, Keyes continued; there would be no black mark against their name. No man stepped forward.

Apprised of their mission, the officers now sat down to plan the minutiae of the raid. William Bury, Vindictive’s engineer officer, crafted a detailed model of the Mole and harbour from plasticine. Aerial photographs were handed out. The men studied every detail. They were asked to sketch specific sections.

By the time the raid came, Royal Marines platoon sergeant Harry Wright was convinced “the officers and NCOs could have walked from one end of the Mole to the other blindfolded”.

Wright was a Royal Marine through-and-through. He had more than a decade’s experience to call upon, from skirmishes in Africa to the battle of matériel on the Western Front. Now his 10 Platoon would be the first ashore at Zeebrugge, charging 200 yards down the Mole to seize a strongpoint while his Devonian comrades charged in the opposite direction to knock out a four-gun emplacement.

Wright carried around 60lb of kit: a SMLE rifle with 60 rounds of ammunition and Mills bombs – the pineapple-shaped grenades which had become the mainstay of the British infantryman. He wore a steel helmet, gas mask and a lifejacket beneath his tunics. If it came to hand-to-hand combat, he would wield a ‘stunning mallet’; officers were rather more refined; they brandished revolvers and strode with walking sticks weighted with lead at one end.

A Lewis machine-gun crew was attached to every platoon, as was a flamethrower. There were dedicated platoons of demolition teams, sailors armed with gun cotton, fuses and detonators. There was a signal platoon, and a team of heavy machine-guns.

The men drilled, kept fit, were subjected to talks and lectures. Marines from Plymouth fixed white triangular patches to their shoulders; a white circle identified their Portsmouth comrades; men from Chatham wore a white diamond. The bayonet was their friend, rifles, machine-guns and Mills bombs were weapons of last resort.

As far as Harry Wright was concerned, the planning for the operation was meticulous. “Every man knew exactly

what to do and where to go.” Many of his comrades were slightly more wary. AB Wainwright chewed over “the sheer audacity of tackling a place like Zeebrugge under the muzzles of the world-famed *Blankenberghe* Battery. The magnitude of the scheme overwhelmed us.” Royal Marine James Feeney and his mates contemplated the task ahead of them on the Mole. “The general opinion here at the moment is that it will be either completely successful or we shall be all wiped out,” he wrote.

A FALSE START

‘HAVE PATIENCE, MEN’

With the preparations complete, Roger Keyes waited for tide, moon and wind to conspire in his favour. April 1918 began badly. Winds were strong, the Channel was choppy. But on Thursday 11, the former weakened, the latter calmed somewhat and Keyes gave the order to sail. In the afternoon and early evening, ships weighed anchor and slipped their moorings and headed for the Belgian coast.

Shortly before midnight, the guns of monitors Erebus and Terror opened up against targets in Zeebrugge. A twin-engined Handley Page heavy bomber dropped several sticks of 112lb bombs over Zeebrugge. German searchlights tried to catch the lumbering giant in their beams. They failed, but engine trouble dogged the aircraft. It plunged into the North Sea off Ostend.

As the bomber plummeted, so the wind too dropped, then picked up again – but in the opposite direction. Now it was blowing *out* to sea.

With barely an hour to go to the target, with all the preliminaries in place, with all the men fired up, Roger Keyes was faced with an agonising decision: to charge the Mole without his sheath of smoke, or return to England’s shores.

The wirelesses crackled. The signalling lamps flashed briefly in the night: N U R S L I N G – return to base.

As their admiral had feared, the men were downhearted as the force arrived back in British ports the next morning. Keyes realised they needed rousing. He strode aboard the Vindictive, gathered every man on the quarterdeck, and mounted a capstan to address them.

The men were cold, almost hostile, their eyes fixed upon him. He had promised them they would partake in a great enterprise “not a heroic disaster”. But the wind had changed direction. The Hun, too, knew something was brewing. “Had we attempted to land last night, it may easily have proved a disaster,” he told the gathered sailors and marines. The Royal Navy would return to Zeebrugge, however, the admiral assured them. “Have patience, men. I can promise you a successful operation.” With that, Roger Keyes departed. The men gave a rousing cheer.

It would be three weeks before tide and moon aligned once more in the Royal Navy’s favour. It was too long to wait. The tide would be favourable in ten days. The moon would not. It would be full.

The marines kicked their heels.

Leave was still cancelled. Communication with the outside world was forbidden. They were cooped up on the pre-dreadnought HMS Hindustan, turned into a floating barracks until the assault was unleashed.

The men played football, practised their drill, removed toe plates and heels from their boots to give them better grip on the concrete base of the Mole. They attended Sunday prayers where their chaplain talked about the fate of the dead. All these activities and more did little to ease the tension.

A NEW DAWN RISES

‘ST GEORGE FOR ENGLAND’

TWISTING THE DRAGON’S TAIL

Chief Stoker Alfred Sago, a 41-year-old East Anglian arrived at HMS Pembroke in Chatham on Monday April 22 1918. It was his seventh draft to the Kentish naval base in his 22 years’ service. It would be his last. And his shortest. He joined HMS Vindictive immediately.

Monday April 22 was also the first new date with a favourable high tide. The weather in Dover was not especially good, but it was rather better along the Flanders coast. At 10.45am Keyes’ yeoman hoisted the signal flags: NASCENT. The raid was on.

James Feeney packed his bags, stowed his hammock, grabbed his mess tin and all the bread, sugar and tea he could find in the mess and filed aboard Vindictive with his comrades. “We are doubtful that it will come off, but we all hope it will,” he noted in his diary.

Roger Keyes strolled down to the harbour in Dover with his wife. “Tomorrow is St George’s Day,” she reminded him as he prepared to join his command ship, the modern, fast destroyer HMS Warwick. “It is sure to be the best day for our enterprise. St George can be trusted to bring good fortune to England.”

The vice admiral agreed. As HMS Warwick steamed into the dusk of a spring night, leading a fleet of more than 50 warships, her signallers flashed a pithy message to HMS Vindictive: S A I N T G E O R G E F O R E N G L A N D .

The lamps on Vindictive flickered through the growing gloom: M A Y W E G I V E T H E D R A G O N S T A I L A D A M N E D G O O D T W I S T .

And perhaps they would. The wind was favourable. It was still favourable at nightfall. Around 10 pm, the rum was handed out. There would be no double measures; what was left when each man had downed his tot was emptied down the scupper.

Some men talked, some played cards, some were lost in quiet contemplation, and some, like James Feeney, grabbed a fitful sleep. “I hope it won’t be my last short one on this planet,” he recorded in his journal.

As the force closed in on the Belgian coast, the bugles sounded. Hot chicken

broth was served to each man before they began to fall in on Vindictive’s upper deck.

The marines loaded their rifles and fixed bayonets. “Our nerves were taut – almost to breaking point,” he recalled. The men talked in whispers, barely audible above the noise of Vindictive’s propellers driving the old ship through the North Sea.

Vizefeuerwerker (deputy ordnance technician) Schröder made his rounds of the *Friedrichsort* coastal battery as he did every night.

The four 28cm guns pointed out to sea, guarding the eastern approaches to Zeebrugge harbour as they always did. And as always, it was a quiet night on Flanders’ coast. Just after midnight – still 11pm on the twenty-second for the British – Schröder returned to his dugout. Barely had he sat down than the bunker shook. *An air raid*, he thought. He quickly corrected himself. *A bombardment*. There was the dull rumble of gunfire at sea, followed by the crash of shells landing ashore. The guns of Terror and Erebus had opened fire.

The impact of the shells tossed men out of their bunks in the dugouts which served the guns. Huge fountains of earth rose above the meadow to the rear, showering the area with soil. But the battery itself remained resolutely intact.

There were still several minutes to go before the task group pounced on Zeebrugge.

It fell to a swarm of small boats – motor launches and coastal motor boats – to wrap the attacking force in a blanket of artificial fog. Some would add to general chaos and confusion at Zeebrugge by lobbing mortars on to the Mole or launching torpedoes at German shipping inside the harbour.

In 55ft CMB 22B, Lt John Annesley cast off from HMS Iphigenia, which had towed the motor boat across the Channel. In the engine room, chief motor mechanic Edward Turk, a mere 19, watched as the twin-screw petrol engines first whined, then hummed, then roared and the launch began to hurtle towards the port well in excess of 30kts.

Annesley’s orders were brief, unambiguous and almost suicidal: close to within 50 yards of the tip of the Mole and lay a smoke screen. Once accomplished CMB 22B would retire, then return to the harbour a few minutes later and throw up a second screen to hide the arrival of the blockships.

On deck, one of Annesley’s men twisted the nozzles on gas cylinders which fed into a strange funnel-shaped device. The chemical concoction mixed and a pungent, thick fog began to swirl around the motor boat. The rest of the fleet of small craft did likewise.

The defenders could not see anything. The cloud of the smokescreen and a light drizzle combined to create an impenetrable wall in the darkness. But they could *hear* something.

Even above the crack of guns, the crash of shells impacting, there was the constant drone of engines.

The noise grew louder, but the artificial fog continued to cloak the approaching force – that is until the wind, and fortune, changed directions.

‘THEY’VE SEEN US’

MURDEROUS HUN FIRE

FEARFUL CASUALTIES

Ronald Boddie brewed a cup of warm soup in a small wooden shack on Thetis’ deck the men labelled the ward room, then donned his duffel coat, grabbed his rucksack containing a brandy flask, lifejacket, pistol and whistle and stepped out on deck. A star shell gave light to the darkness, followed by another, then another.

The sight of the flares perturbed the marines crammed like sardines aboard HMS Vindictive. “They’ve seen us,” one Royal nudged his comrade. *They* had – and there were still 300 or so yards to go before Vindictive grappled with the Mole.

The flare was followed almost immediately by an almighty crash as the first shell smashed into Vindictive’s upper deck. The marines were packed together “as thick as bees”. The slaughter wrought by the German guns was indescribable. Pte Bill Scorey was thrown across the ship by the impact of an enemy shell, his tin helmet shattered, his rifle smashed. He was one of the lucky ones; his comrades were blown to bits. “The few minutes between the first shell and when we landed were the worst of the whole business,” flamethrower carrier William Gough remembered. “Our casualties were fearful.” Marine Ernie Clist counted a good 30 or 40 comrades laid flat on the deck, dead or wounded.

“Our ranks,” Harry Wright bitterly observed, “got thinner every moment.”

Vindictive’s exposed bridge had been surrounded by breast-high mattresses to soften the impact of shrapnel. There was nothing they could do in the face of a direct hit, however. Royal Marine Capt Arthur Chater urged his two superiors, Lt Col Bertram Elliot and Maj Alexander Corder, to keep their heads down. A veteran of Antwerp and Gallipoli, Chater knew the hideous effects of modern firepower. His superiors ignored his advice. Suddenly, the colonel and the major dropped to the deck. Chater grabbed both bodies and tried to speak to them, but Elliot and Corder were dead.

Vindictive shielded Iris from the brunt of the enemy’s fire – as did the high Mole wall. As the converted ferry sailed past the old cruiser, Royal Marine L/Cpl George Calverley watched flames leap out of the funnel and flamethrowers belch sheaths of fire along the Mole. *This*, thought Calverley, *was what Dante’s Inferno must have been like*.

The German guns were relentless, merciless. “Every man was serving the guns, dripping with sweat, covered in powder marks – everybody from the battery commander to the youngest sailor,” *Artilleriemaat* (gunner’s mate)

Richard Policke recalled. Tonight, there were no ranks, no officers and men, only gunners.

The suicidal charge expected of the coastal motor boats was turning out to be just that. German guns at the end of the Mole had not been neutralised by Vindictive, nor did the elaborate smoke screen offer any protection. Speed and skill were the only allies of the small, fast craft as they weaved about in the dark. Every one of Annesley’s handful of crew was injured; Edward Turk was struck in the face, his left eye wounded by German shell fire. Yet his boat continued to run – and to defy the Hun – thanks to the combined efforts of all of his sailors.

ON THE MOLE

MARINES DECIMATED

‘WE ARE ALL EQUAL NOW’

St George’s Day was barely 60 seconds old as HMS Vindictive crashed against the Mole, several hundred yards nearer shore than she should have done, peppered by enemy fire. Her captain, Alfred Carpenter, struggled to control his ship which bucked and rolled violently. He had lost perhaps half his ship’s company and storming party already. All but two of his boarding ramps had been shot away. His elaborate flamethrower had been disabled.

His anchors struggled to dig into the seabed. When one did, the cruiser careered wildly until Carpenter brought her alongside the Mole again.

The anchor at last worked; the grappling hooks did not. They simply would not grasp the concrete and hold Vindictive firmly in place.

Only HMS Daffodil saved the day. With every ounce of pressure squeezed out of her engines, the hurriedly-converted ferry pushed the cruiser against the Mole and struggled to hold her there.

The two remaining gangways crashed on to the Mole wall. For 15 minutes, Vindictive had born the brunt of the enemy’s wrath. “We are just going over the top,” one marine cried. “We are all equal now.”

Harry Wright and his platoon scrambled over dead bodies and the mangled upper deck, then along the precarious walkway, before leaping on to the Mole wall which was raked with machine-gun fire.

The marines hurriedly lowered their assault ladders and dropped the 20 or so feet on to the floor of the Mole. Of the 45 men in Harry Wright’s platoon, there were now just 12 left.

Still they stuck to their task. Terror had given way to anger. They were determined to avenge the deaths of so many of their comrades. Hatred etched on their faces, rifles gripped in their hands, they charged the 200 yards along the pier as planned, prepared to thrust the cold steel of their bayonets into the first German they could find. But the Germans had gone. The emplacement Wright’s platoon had been ordered to storm was empty.



● *The gap blown in the viaduct by the destruction of submarine HMS C3*



And then it was as though Heaven came to meet Earth in one momentary upheaval... C3 and the viaduct were no more. Great chunks of masonry fell in the water all around us. The boat rocked and swayed as though possessed. Flames shot up to a tremendous height. In their glare was visible a great break in the Mole...

— LS William Cleaver, HMS C3

Sailor William Gough had been ordered to destroy any opposition he found in a shed on the Mole. The shed no longer existed. Its four walls stood, but the building was burned out, its occupants dead or gone.

But on the inner Mole wall, a German destroyer rode up and down with the swell, all its guns blazing away at the attackers storming the pier. Gough directed his flamethrower at them. The mixture of fuel oil and petrol ignited as it shot out of the nozzle, spraying a sheet of flame almost 100ft long. Gough raked the upper deck of the warship until the fuel cylinder was empty, then dumped his useless weapon and headed back to his ship.

Despite their terrible losses, at least some of Vindictive's raiding party had forced their way ashore. HMS Iris' assault troops were still stuck aboard the converted ferry.

The swell carried the small ship up and down violently. Lt Cdr George Bradford scrambled up the grappling anchor in a bid to get it to hook into the Mole wall, while the marines desperately tried to keep the scaling ladders in position.

Bradford came from a family of heroes. One brother had earned the DSO, a second a posthumous Military Cross, a third, Roland, a VC on the Somme before he was later killed in action. George Bradford shared his brothers' defining trait: selfless sacrifice. He managed to fix the grappling hook to the Mole wall. He was shot almost immediately, falling into the sea. A shipmate dived in after him. He too died.

At the same time, a naval lieutenant, Claude Hawkings, scurried up a scaling ladder, then jumped on to the Mole. None of his shipmates followed him. As Hawkings turned to fix the ladder to the wall he fell, like Bradford, to a hail of machine-gun bullets.

The hook which cost George Bradford his life – and subsequently earned him the VC – bent and broke away from the Mole wall as Iris fell with the swell.

There was no hope of Iris' men storming the Mole directly. Her captain, Cdr Valentine Gibbs, brought his ship alongside Vindictive. His men would have to fight their way over the cruiser's dead and wounded to get ashore.

A TOWER OF FLAME

‘VERY LAST WORD IN NOISE’

HMS C3 had so far escaped most of the enemy's fire. The obsolete submarine had parted company with the destroyer which had towed her across the Channel almost an hour before.

Now Lt Richard Sandford – ‘Uncle Baldy’ to his men, a nickname earned by his slightly old-fashioned manner and

receding hairline despite his 26 years – charged his boat “at full tilt” towards the viaduct at the foot of the Mole. His five crew held on to the bridge rails for dear life as the beams of searchlights held the small submarine in their grasp. C3 began to draw ineffective fire, but at 9kts, the submarine clattered into the wood and steel girders of the bridge with “a good jolt”. The submariners climbed into a skiff while Sandford lit the fuse to the five tons of Amatol which would vaporise the old boat in a matter of minutes.

“Come on, sir,” his comrades exerted as the initially-stunned German defenders began to pour fire down from viaduct. The officer joined his men, who rowed furiously away from C3, showered constantly by German fire. “They couldn't hit a pussy cat,” Sandford sneered. But they could. He was hit in the leg, so too a young seaman. A petty officer was also wounded. The skiff was riddled and began to take on water. “And then it was as though Heaven came to meet Earth in one momentary upheaval,” recalled LS William Cleaver.

C3 simply ceased to exist. Chunks of viaduct and submarine flew up to 800 yards. A gap 70ft wide and 200ft long had been blown in the bridge. The defenders of the Mole were cut off from the mainland.

Aboard HMS Vindictive there was a huge cheer. “Up went a huge tower of flame and debris and bodies into the black sky!” Capt Carpenter recalled. “I never saw such a column of flame! It seemed a mile high!” To Pte James Feeney, who had just blown up a railway shed with grenades, the explosion of C3 was “the very last word in noise”.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

ENTER THE BLOCKSHIPS

Ronald Boddie had watched the battle from afar. It had been strangely mesmerising. But now it was Thetis' hour. He clambered down to the aged cruiser's engine room where he found his stokers “merry and bright”. Thetis was still plodding along at seven knots. The telephone rang. It was Thetis' captain Cdr Ralph Sneyd. The ship had been illuminated by star

shell, but motorboats were doing their best to shield the blockship behind a wall of artificial fog.

Boddie looked at the faces of his shipmates. They were nervous, but tried to hide their fear by smoking furiously. They stoked the fires far more urgently than the ship's speed demanded.

The telegraph rang. *Full ahead.* Thetis gathered speed. The engines crashed and banged. The men's fear turned to exhilaration. Boiling water gushed out of the piston rods and the venerable cruiser sliced through the North Sea at 16kts.

The men of the *Friedrichsort* battery were firing blindly. They could make out nothing amid the smoke and swirl of battle. They aimed their guns at the end of the Mole and fired repeatedly.

Suddenly, out of the fog and smoke, came HMS Thetis. *Vizefeuerwerker* Schröder watched as the German guns scored hit after hit on the lumbering warship. “Suddenly a huge column of smoke and steam shot out of the ship and completely enveloped it.”

The noise of Thetis' engines drowned out the noise of battle. Ronald Boddie had no idea what was happening to his ship. His stokers had given their all. So too, it seemed, had the ship's engines.

First the starboard engine failed, then the port. Steam and hot water gushed from every outlet.

Boddie telephoned the bridge. The line was dead. He sent a runner. The man never returned. Everyone topside must be dead, the engineer reasoned, and ordered his men to open the seacocks and abandon ship.

As Thetis' crew gathered on the quarterdeck, a sailor found Boddie. The captain was alive – and he wanted his ship to sail on.

Ronald Boddie returned whence he had came. The North Sea was now roaring into the engine room, but there was still time to close the cocks.

For what it was worth, Boddie and his men grappled with the engines. To their astonishment, the machines struggled into life. Thetis lurched for another half mile before finally running aground.



● *‘They could be relied upon to tackle any situation’... Senior rates from the Coastal Motor Boats and Motor Launches. Edward Turk of CMB 22B is on the far left*

aft funnel was smashed. Her boilers exploded. A few hundred yards off the Mole, she ground to a halt... but the German guns did not.

Destroyer HMS Phoebe tried to come to North Star's rescue. A line was tossed to the stricken warship and Phoebe attempted to pull her to safety. The line snapped. Now Phoebe decided to go alongside North Star to take her men off as her captain reluctantly realised his ship was beyond saving.

The German guns now blasted both ships. Phoebe's funnels were partly shot away. Her crew began to help North Star's survivors aboard.

“Men began to scramble across the gap between the two ships,” recalled Telegraphist Vernon Mogg of Phoebe. “Some slipped and fell between. Some were able to get back, but others had a difficult job as the water was covered with an oily slime.” Phoebe lowered her boats. Riddled with bullets and shell holes, they sank. Ropes were cast over the side and North Star's crew struggled up them.

With all the survivors aboard, Phoebe began to break away. A figure was spotted on North Star's deck. Phoebe drew in again, her sailors urging the man to jump across. He stepped back, took a run up and attempted to leap the gap. At that very instant a shell exploded at his side. The jumping sailor vanished; he never made the deck of Phoebe.

THE FORCE DEPARTS

MARINES LEFT BEHIND

‘A HEAP OF DEAD AND DYING’

With the blockships' work done, the time had come for Vindictive to depart. On the cruiser's battered bridge, Capt Carpenter gave the order to sound the signal to retire: K in Morse code, blasted by the ship's horn.

The horn, like so much on Vindictive, had fallen victim to the German guns. The order was passed to Daffodil. Her siren belched into life, but amid the tumult of battle it was barely, if at all, audible. It fell to men to improvise: runners and hand signals spread the word along the Mole.

Pte James Feeney and 15 comrades scurried down the Mole two at a time “running the gauntlet” over concrete swept by a machine-gun fire.

He climbed the ladder to the top of the wall, then down the gangway on the opposite side. Vindictive was heaving violently up and down – and the enemy was still pouring a hail of fire upon her. He jumped over the boarding ramp and dashed to the starboard side where some protection was afforded the men.

“It was terrible here,” he recalled. Seeing the dead and listening to the dying made him feel sick. He cast off his kit, removed his gas mask and sat down next to Cpl ‘Tubby’ Smith. “He had one leg clean knocked off – and was talking bravely,” Feeney remembered. Twenty-nine-year-old Tubby Smith died within the hour. He was one of five Smiths to die that night on Flanders' coast.

Sgt Harry Wright heard the signal to retire. But in the chaos of battle orders became counter-orders. He and 11 comrades now watched as Vindictive began to move away from the Mole. Perhaps she might return. Perhaps motor boats might come to the men's rescue. The marines climbed the Mole wall, cast their equipment and life jackets into the sea and lay down, pretending to be dead.

George Calverley clambered down

the wide staircase which led to Iris' lower deck. “The worst is over,” a comrade assured him “Now it's a matter of getting home. Where are the others?” The man gasped slightly, then fell forward. Calverley bent down to catch him. The next thing he knew, he was 15ft away, lying on his side. Slowly his hearing returned. He struggled to move his legs before slowly standing up. All around was the sound of moaning, crying men. Where he had been standing at the foot of the staircase “was a heap of dead and dying”. He did what he could for his comrades “which was very little” he lamented, for the injuries were too grave and the means for dealing with them too inadequate.

The scenes on Iris were repeated – with interest – aboard HMS Vindictive. “I shall never forget the sight of the mess decks,” James Feeney recalled. “Dead and dying lying on the decks and tables where, but a few hours before, they ate, drank and played cards. In the light of day it was a shambles.” To Feeney, success or failure, Zeebrugge had “cost a great deal of blood”.

Arthur Chater felt nothing but failure. He sat down with Edward Bamford. Both men shared the same feeling. “We had lost many good men with what seemed to us no result,” Chater lamented. Consumed totally by the bitter fighting on the Mole, neither officer knew that the blockships had reached their objectives.

Ronald Boddie slumped down in the wardroom pantry of a motor launch, next to his captain Ralph Sneyd – now a captain without a ship.

Sneyd had been shot in both legs and in one heel. His clothes were still soaked after falling into the harbour. He passed the engineer a saucepan, filled with vomit. After the experience they had gone through, Sneyd urged, every man should fill it.

Other survivors of the blockships were eventually transferred to HMS Warwick. Provision for the wounded was woefully inadequate. Medics bandaged wounds, handed out morphine, blankets. Roger Keyes toured the mess decks and spoke to each wounded man, assuring them “that their work had been the finest thing in history.”

Playing dead, Harry Wright lay on the Mole for two hours, listening to the clatter of machine-guns, watching star shells dance in the April night.

It was approaching dawn when the defenders of Zeebrugge began moving along the Mole to round up stragglers and clear up the dead.

A few Germans crouched down to begin searching the bodies of Wright and his comrades. The marines twitched. The Germans leaped back. Their officer stepped forward. “The game's up, lads,” he said in remarkably good English. “Play the game and we will play the game with you. Lay down your arms and put your hands up and we will not harm you.”

With dawn the true horrors of the devastation aboard HMS Iris became obvious to Royal Marine George Calverley. He found the body of her captain, Valentine Gibbs, both his legs shot away.

Of six Royal Marine officers, three were dead, two were wounded and a sixth

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staggered around the converted ferry shellshocked. The mortar crew were all dead. In fact, everywhere George Calverley cast his eyes, there were dead and dying men. The former were lined up side-by-side on the deck; the latter were cared for as best the survivors could manage.

LIMPING HOME

‘A FRIGHTFUL SHAMBLES’

Battered and scarred, HMS Vindictive steamed into Dover shortly after 8am. Her ship’s company immediately began clearing the dead and wounded. “We had no time to separate the dead from the living,” engineer William Bury recalled. “The upper deck was a dreadful sight – truncated remains, sand bags, blackened corpses.” Ambulances carried the injured away – more than 200 men in all. For the dead, there were trucks to carry their lifeless bodies to Dover’s mortuary.

As Vindictive arrived beneath the imposing yet reassuring white cliffs of the Kentish coast, the dozen Royal Marines seized on the Mole were lined up against a wall in full view of hundreds of Germans and Belgian forced labourers.

Harry Wright expected to be shot at any moment but instead, his captors wheeled out a large camera; the picture of the tin-hatted English prisoners, some wounded, some defiant, all tired, all dirty, all slightly dishevelled, would be reproduced around the world.

The marines were led along the Mole, over the makeshift bridge of planks and wires which spanned the gap blown by C3, and into the port.

“Windows and doors were blown in and bricks and mortar were lying all over the place,” Wright recalled. “There was not a window anywhere that was not broken.”

Ronald Boddie enjoyed a hot bath aboard the depot ship Arrogant in Dover, dined on a fine breakfast, and dashed off a curt telegram to his family: *Work completed, all well.*

His friend William Bury was already in the bar of the Burlington, a towering yet rather gaudy hotel which dominated the Dover seafloor.

Perhaps it was the alcohol, or perhaps it was the adrenaline still rushing through his veins, but Bury made “an unnecessarily rude remark to the barmaid”; she gave as good as she got, sending the officer scurrying “with a flea in his ear”.

Ejected from the Burlington, William Bury returned to his ship accompanied by his friend Vindictive, Ronald Boddie remembered, “was a frightful shambles”. All her crew had left her. Only dockyard workers were aboard now, hosing down the blood-stained decks and bulkheads and gathering up dozens of blood-soaked uniforms which they tossed in a corner.

It was mid-afternoon before HMS Iris limped into Dover. Two trains – one an ambulance – waited on the quayside. The wounded were taken to Chatham’s naval hospital. The uninjured waited for trucks to ferry them back to barracks in Deal. Four wagons turned up. Only two were required.

George Calverley went straight to his barrack room. It was just as



● A German marine guards Sgt Harry Wright and comrades, captured on the Mole

the men had left it: the kit bags were still piled up at one end. Twenty-four men had walked out of the room the day before. Just 11 returned. “There were no jokes, no silly quips in the room that night,” the Royal Marine remembered. “On looking around I began to realise how fortunate I had been.” Calverley enjoyed his first meal in 24 hours, soaked in a warm bath and went to bed.

GLORIOUS FAILURE

‘THE MEN MAGNIFICENT’

ENGLISH ‘WHOPPERS’

The men on the Mole bore the brunt of the casualties at Zeebrugge. In all, the raid had cost 170 dead, more than twice as many wounded, and 45 missing. But to what end?

Throughout the morning a succession of RAF bombers flew above Zeebrugge, dropping bombs on German troops and Belgian forced workers clearing up after the Navy’s raid. Cameras on the aircraft whirled and clicked. The flak guns surrounding the Mole barked. The aircraft jinked, then turned out to sea before returning to base.

The films were rushed to dark rooms. As the technicians began to develop them, three large forms became evident in the entrance to the canal: two at an angle in the neck, a third almost perpendicular to the entrance.

To the untrained eye it appeared as if the bottle was corked. The senior German naval officer, Admiral Ludwig von Schröder – *Löwe von Flandern*, Lion of Flanders – toured the scene of battle. He was perturbed by the sight of the blockships, their masts and superstructure peeping above the water in the entrance to the canal.

His fears were soon allayed as two torpedo boats skilfully squeezed between the hulks and headed out into the North Sea. A U-boat soon followed them.

In Room 40, the Admiralty’s famed cryptology section, the decoders listened for tell-tale signals. They soon arrived. Barely had Keyes returned to port than his masters knew the raid had failed.

The Admiralty had learned the lessons of Jutland, however. A belated and lacklustre communiqué in the wake of the clash of dreadnoughts had seriously undermined the public mood – and faith in the Navy.

Jutland had been a strategic victory. A costly one, to be sure, and one whose effects were not immediately apparent, but a victory all the same.

Zeebrugge had been costly too; it had also been a failure. Telling the public as much, their lordships reasoned, would do nothing for British morale, still rocky after the Kaiser’s spring offensives on the Western Front.

Instead, the raid at Zeebrugge was trumpeted for what it was – an heroic deed in the finest traditions of the Royal Navy – and also for what it was not – an out-and-out success. Years later, newspapermen, books, even Keyes himself, would insist the canal had been blocked.

“They blocked it so neatly, so effectively, that it will be utterly useless as a submarine base for many months to come,” Vindictive’s Capt Alfred Carpenter proclaimed on his return to a naval journalist.

● Vindictive’s Capt Alfred Carpenter VC poses after the raid with the ship’s cat

The Admiralty communiqué was no less disingenuous. “The canal is effectively blocked,” it declared. It was at least accurate in admitting that Zeebrugge had been a bloody affair. “Many were killed and more were wounded,” the statement conceded, yet throughout “the men were magnificent”. It continued:

Where every moment had its deed and every deed its hero, a recital of acts of valour becomes a mere catalogue.

Britain’s newspapers did not mind. They recited those acts of valour week after week in the spring of 1918. “Instead of being only magnificent and not war,” wrote *The Observer*, “it was magnificent and the soul of war,” while the *Daily Mail* celebrated “an immortal deed”. There were hastily-published propaganda books – *How We Twisted the Dragon’s Tail*, and *The Glory of Zeebrugge and The Vindictive*. And there was fulsome praise from the premier, Lloyd George. “Every child knows the story of Zeebrugge, the one naval exploit of the war that moved and still moves the imagination of the nation,” he wrote. “Sir Roger Keyes, the admiral who directed the attack, had the unmistakable Nelson touch.”

The tubthumping was all a bit too much for Pte James Feeney. “To those blessed quill-drivers, I should like to see them on a stunt like that,” he fumed.

He wasn’t the only one fuming. The men of the *Marinekorps Flandern* bristled. The rather terse communiqué issued by their masters conveyed little, if anything, of their heroics that night. Worse still, it failed to convey the simple fact: for all the bravery, for all the skill, for all the improvisation of the British, their plan had failed.

Instead, the world – even the German public – preferred to believe the British *faustdicke Lügen* – whoppers – seethed *Vizeadmiral* Hermann Jacobsen, the official chronicler of the *Marinekorps Flandern*.

“This web of lies was spun so cleverly that long after the war, the English depict the operation at Zeebrugge as an exploit and shining victory in film, pictures and writing.”

To the public, a picture spoke a thousand words. They could see the blockships sunk in the canal’s entrance.

It wasn’t just the public who were swayed by the sight of these sunken leviathans. A procession of senior German officers visited Zeebrugge. Most possessed little, if any, knowledge of the sea. They could not comprehend how these steel monsters had penetrated the harbour. The blockships should have been blasted out of the water long before they threatened to block the canal.

FOR VALOUR

MEMENTOES OF BATTLE

THE TWISTED TAIL

On the morning of Wednesday April 24, L/Cpl George Calverley mustered for roll call with the rest of his company. He looked up and down the line. Of the 13 men in his section, a mere three were fit for duty.

With the names taken, the men were told to vote. Two marines would earn the Victoria Cross, one officer, one from the ranks. It was for the survivors to decide. The names of Capt Edward Bamford –

wounded leading the platoons ashore – and Sgt Norman Finch – wounded directing the guns in Vindictive’s foretop – received the most votes.

In the wake of Zeebrugge, the Admiralty was fulsome in its praise and lavish in awarding honours.

Eight men received the nation’s highest award for gallantry: like *Capt Bamford* and *Sgt Finch*, *Capt Alfred Carpenter* earned his Victoria Cross by ballot after setting “a magnificent example”. Another ballot winner was the “very gallant”

AB Albert McKenzie who continued to wield his machine-gun “to the utmost advantage” despite being wounded as he stormed the Mole. *George Bradford* faced “certain death” trying to hook HMS Iris to the Mole; he had shown “absolute self-sacrifice”. *Lt Cdr Arthur Harrison* led an assault party against the guns at the tip of the Mole “with indomitable resolution and courage of the highest order”; he was killed while every one of his men was killed or wounded with him. *Richard Sandford* had “eagerly” led HMS C3 on her “hazardous enterprise” to blow up the viaduct. Lastly, *Lt Percy Dean* commanded Motor Launch 282 “in a most magnificent and heroic manner” to rescue the crews of blockships Intrepid and Iphigenia.

There were scores of other awards: DSOs, DSCs, DSMs. Dozens of participants received mentions in dispatches. There were even 19 *Croix de Guerre* conferred on the heroes of Zeebrugge by the French.

And there were more personal mementoes. Chief Stoker Alfred Sago was among those whose name went forward in the ballot from HMS Vindictive for the VC; it went to Albert McKenzie, but Sago was awarded the DSM. Much more treasured, however, was a quart rum measure, with a hole on one side and a large chunk missing from the other.

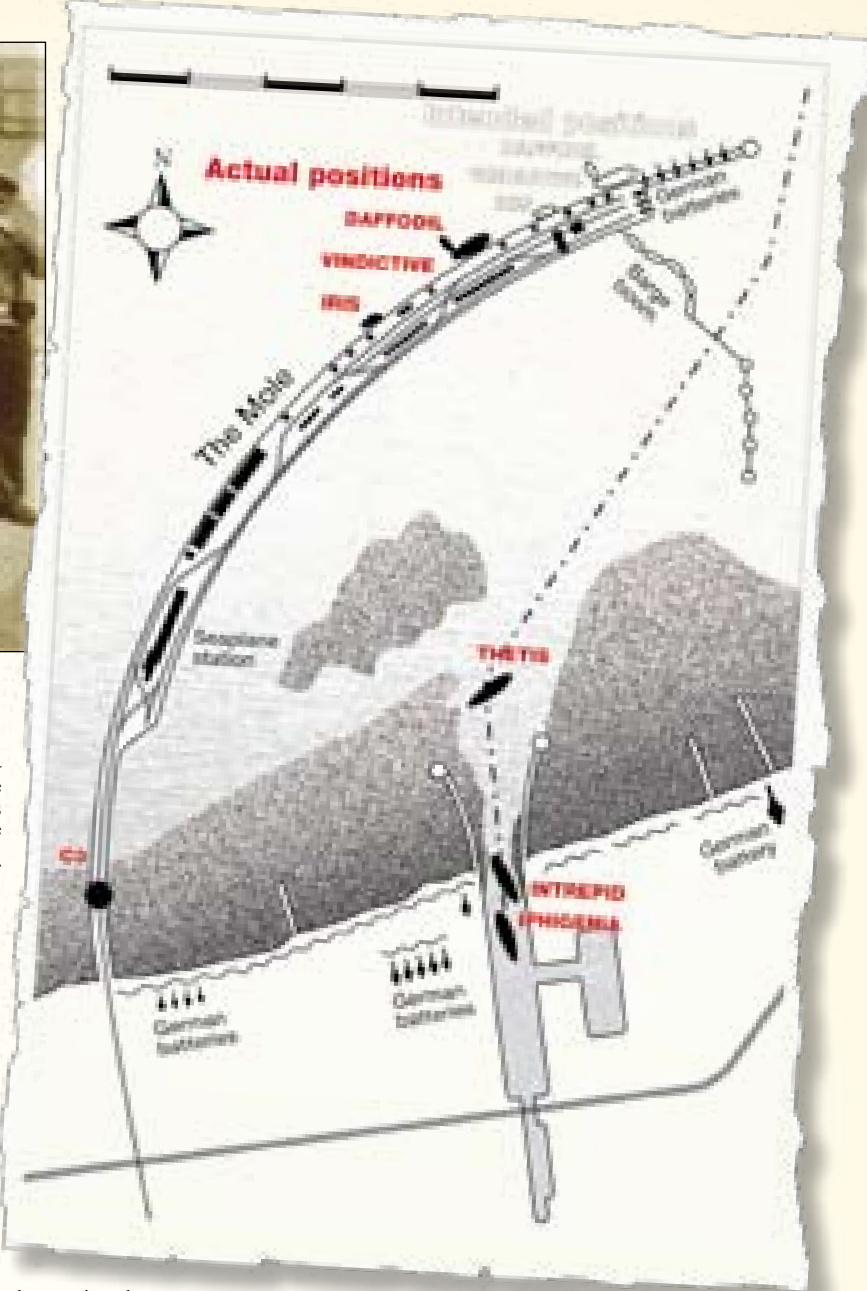
His family came to know it, in his later life as a publican in Suffolk, simply as ‘grandad’s mug’. It sat on the sideboard, stuffed with pencils. For whatever reason, as his shipmates filed off the Vindictive in Dover, the senior rating grabbed the battered jug as a reminder of that fateful night.

It wasn’t the only unusual object picked up as a keepsake. A chunk of wood, shot off CMB 22B as she was raked by fire off the Mole, landed at Edward Turk’s feet. He held on to it – so too a box of matches he’d had in his pockets, and a ‘certificate for wounds and hurts’, signed by his commanding officer the day after the battle.

Four days after the raid, George Calverley returned to Chatham. A band waited in the port’s railway station to welcome the marines home. A large crowd, too, had gathered.

As the doors on the carriages opened, the crowd rushed the train. Some wanted to celebrate, most wanted to know what had happened to their husbands, fathers, brothers.

The throng eventually dispersed. The marines fell in and marched through Chatham to their barracks, cheered all the way by onlookers. The men halted on the parade



ground, posed for a formal portrait, and enjoyed tea served by the wives of officers.

With that, the Zeebrugge raid was finally over for George Calverley. He drew his pay and travel warrant and headed off on seven days’ leave.

Harry Wright spent the rest of the war as a guest of the Kaiser. He returned to active duty a generation later serving in Defensively-Equipped Merchant Ships providing protection for vessels running the gauntlet of the Nazi blockade around the British Isles.

Fate was not especially kind to the six survivors of the raid to receive the Empire’s highest honour. Albert McKenzie fell victim to the influenza epidemic which ravaged the world – he died barely a week before the Armistice was signed; Richard Sandford died of typhoid fever before the year was out; and Edward Bamford succumbed to a mysterious illness contracted on active service in the Far East in 1928. Alfred Carpenter headed across the Atlantic on a lecture tour before he held a series of staff appointments and commands at sea, rising to vice admiral. He was pressed into action once again in World War 2, this time in charge of a Home Guard detachment in Gloucestershire. Percy Dean served, briefly, as Conservative MP for his native Blackburn after the war; he died six months before war engulfed Europe again. Norman Finch served in the Corps on and off for the next quarter of a century, passing away in Portsmouth in 1966.

Roger Keyes never did bottle up the beast in his lair. Nor too did he ever let go of his belief that the raid had imprisoned U-boats in their concrete den. Ironically it was the other methods he had introduced which truly strangled the *Unterseebootsflotille Flandern*. Fewer and fewer boats dared to run the gauntlet of the Strait of Dover. In the six months after the St George’s Day assault, half the boats at Bruges were destroyed on operations; a dozen fell victim to Keyes’ Dover Patrol.

Keyes himself would rise to become Admiral of the Fleet. He commanded the battle-cruiser force, then the Mediterranean Fleet, and finally Portsmouth Command. He rose no higher. The post of First Sea Lord was denied him and in 1931, he retired.

War saw him recalled to military duty. He served as liaison to the

Belgian king when the Germans invaded – a mission which lasted only as long as the Belgians held out: three weeks. More aptly, he was named the first Director of Combined Operations – largely thanks to Zeebrugge. He laid the foundations for modern amphibious and commando operations, but quarrelled regularly with fellow senior officers. His tenure lasted less than 18 months.

Keyes spent much the remainder of the war on goodwill tours of the Americas and Commonwealth. He died on Boxing Day 1945 aged 73. He is buried at Dover alongside the dead of the Zeebrugge raid.

The living of Zeebrugge continued to gather at the foot of the Mole each year well into the 1980s. Each April 23 they laid wreaths at the monument to the fallen in front of the Hotel de la Victoire. They filed to a nearby church for a service in both Flemish and English, then marched outside where children laid a flower on the grave of the dead of St George’s Day. If the breeze was stiff, the veterans’ standard would billow furiously: a White Ensign adorned with a dragon with a twisted tail.

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